THE MEDIEVAL LEGACY

Compton Wynyates, an Elizabethan manor-house

THE
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by

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All the illustrations in this book are from original photographs by the author.

Preface

THE legacy handed down to the present day from the Middle Ages is rich and varied, and comprehends almost every phase of medieval life. Yet full awareness of it— of the wealth of beauty and interest which can be found in ancient buildings, for instance—is comparatively recent. Today it seems incredible that the sacred precincts of St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury should have been used as a beer garden, that the Norman keep of the castle in the same city was a coal dump. Yet that was the position in the nineteenth century.

Public opinion has changed rapidly since the turn of the century. The National Trust, the Ministry of Works, hundreds of local associations and societies, have all contributed most effectively to securing the preservation of the historic heritage. Many sites, especially of castles and monasteries, have been excavated and their story pieced together from the foundations which have been uncovered. Moreover, popular as opposed to scientific interest has been increased by articles in the Press and by radio and television programmes. The motor-car has widened the horizon of millions of people. A higher standard of education has made appreciation of what is historic or beautiful possible for more people than ever before.

The medieval legacy can be regarded in two ways—as a storehouse of the art and architecture of the Middle Ages or as a pointer to the nature of medieval life, more reliable and often more detailed than the accounts of contemporary or near-contemporary historians. My purpose in writing this book has been to interest the reader in the vast possibilities of the latter approach.

Some parts of the legacy have obvious beauty, especially the cathedrals and the thousands of medieval parish churches, with their wealth of carving in wood and stone. Yet even in these cases I feel that aesthetic appreciation is enhanced by knowledge of what they stood for in the life of the Middle Ages. Other parts of the legacy are much less obviously beautiful. The meagre

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remains of an abbey or priory, the gaunt fragments of a Norman castle, may not strike the casual wayfarer at first glance as being worth a visit. Many, for instance, who visit the site of the once wealthy foundation of Shaftesbury Abbey come away bitterly disappointed. Yet every one of these ruins has a story of real interest to tell, if only the visitor can interpret what he sees. I hope that this book will help those who read it to a better informed and therefore more satisfying interpretation.

In a sense the following chapters are a record of a lifelong hobby. I have been fortunate in being able to visit several thousand historic sites and buildings in all parts of Great Britain. Everything that I have written is derived from first-hand impressions and all the illustrations are from photographs I have taken, mostly during the last few years.

My most sincere wish is that what I have written will encourage readers to go in search of some lesser-known phases of the historic legacy, or will enable them to share in the never-failing pleasure which I have experienced in pursuit of my hobby. I hope too that the inferences I have drawn from what I have seen will be of interest to more serious students of history and that for them the book will prove a useful summary of some of the most important and interesting parts of our national heritage.

The Historic Background

THE medieval cathedrals and churches, the abbeys and priories, the castles and castellated manor-houses, the market crosses and guildhalls—those are some of the most important links with the life and times of the Middle Ages. By interpreting them it is possible to learn a great deal about how people lived, about the ideals and preoccupations of the nobility, the churchmen, and the common folk. These links with medieval life and thought are set against an historic background, a sequence of events, the pattern of which is inferred from other sources, especially from the work of contemporary and near-contemporary historians.

There is no need to depend for knowledge of later periods on the pick-and-shovel historians, as in the story of Britain before the eleventh century A.D. There is an abundance of literary evidence, even though in the work of medieval historians fact and fancy are inextricably linked and the borderline between legend and truth is uncommonly difficult to draw. Even when an historian was writing of events which took place in his own lifetime, his judgement was liable to be warped by prejudice, while many followed the example of the historians of Rome's Silver Age and invented imaginary happenings which they presented as fact in order to support their personal interpretation of events.

The work of every medieval historian, therefore, has to be studied from a critical standpoint. Nor is that surprising when we reflect on the astonishingly different ways in which history presents itself to historians of our own times, especially to historians of different countries, as of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Prejudices and bias are still present in the modern world, even though critical ability has increased out of all recognition and scholarship has become a profession open to many times more people than in the Middle Ages. Yet we have all seen for ourselves that a scholarly work can be biased and the presentation of events

may be coloured by the psychology of the writer. One may read two accounts of the industrial revolution, one by a scholar brought up in the traditions of conservatism, another by a scholar of equal standing who has been brought up in the atmosphere of radical ideas. The results may be and generally are wholly different. Yet one would hesitate to suggest that the bias shown one way or the other was a deliberate perversion of facts. It represents the individual historian's interpretation of events.

So we must accept the fact that the early historians of Britain were interpreting events in the light of their own preconceptions; also that knowledge of events must often have been slight in an age in which the art of writing was the prerogative of the few, and research in the modern sense of the term was out of the question.

This background summary of events, therefore, must inevitably be a tentative one, while the interpretation put on the events is not necessarily the interpretation which would be put on them by all modern scholars. Yet such a factual background is essential if the meaning of the medieval heritage is to be understood, if the significance of church and castle and abbey is to be given its due weight, and the mute evidence of brick and stone is to be used to throw light on social conditions and economic changes from Anglo-Saxon days to the time when modern history was heralded by the Renaissance and the Reformation of religion in Tudor times.

1066 is a magical number in British history. It is the year in which in the eyes of many Victorian schoolchildren the history of England began. It is indeed a magical number in that a new era of history began in that year. Nevertheless, contrary to the Victorian idea that descent from a Norman family was the hallmark of English nobility, 1066 in effect marked the end of the rule of the English, that is, of the Angles and the Saxons and the Jutes who settled the greater part of England after the break-up of the Roman Empire and may well be regarded as the true native people of the country. Thereafter the governing class was alien, though the fusion of the two contrasting ways of life, the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman, was achieved within a remarkably short space of time. Most of the great landowners who ruled the destiny of the country for many hundreds of years and were still doing so to a marked extent at the beginning of Queen Victoria's long reign,

were mainly descended from the Norman overlords whom William I set over the Saxons, or from Anglo-Norman families which achieved power during the following century.

When William of Normandy, with the blessing of the Pope, gathered his task force and sailed across the Channel to claim the throne of England by force from the Saxon Harold, the country presented a most misleading appearance of a united realm. The days of the petty kingdoms of the sixth and seventh centuries—the kingdoms of Kent and Mercia, of Wessex and Northumbria and Strathclyde—were long past. England, the history books say, had been united under King Alfred. That is basically true, in the sense that the treaty which Alfred concluded with the Danish King Guthrum at Wedmore proved indirectly the beginning of the end of the Viking settlement of England, but much water had flowed under the wooden piers of London Bridge since that time. Another Danish king, Sweyn, had ravaged most of eastern England. His son Canute had been accepted by the Witan without dispute as King of all England, as he was of Denmark and much of Scandinavia, the first foreign king to occupy the Saxon throne.

In the struggles which ensued after his death for the control of his empire England virtually broke up once more into a number of petty kingdoms. The earldoms of later Anglo-Saxon times were virtually kingdoms which were none the less independent, especially in the case of Wessex, because their earls found it convenient to do homage to the sovereign. There was no real unity but a growing conflict of interest between the royal house and the followers of the Anglo-Saxon earls. In any case it would have taken an unusually strong ruler to have wielded effective authority over the whole of England at a time when communications were negligible and there was no organized army at the service of the Crown.

When King Edward, known as the Confessor because of his piety, and canonized after his death in token of the enthusiastic support he gave to the religious foundations of the time, came to the throne matters began to go from bad to worse. If a prophet is honoured save in his own country King Edward may be said to have been honoured at all times except during his lifetime. In outlook he was more Norman than English. His mother was a

Norman, his childhood and early manhood had been spent in exile in Normandy, his friends were Norman, his sympathies international. No one less likely to weld a disunited country into an integrated whole could be imagined.

For a time he sparred with Earl Godwin of Wessex, the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon earls, but later he abandoned the hopeless struggle and chose a life of seclusion, surrounding himself with his Norman friends, and devoting himself to meditation and the the practical work of superintending the building of the Abbey of Westminster. He was content to hold his high office in the sure knowledge that his activities were acceptable to the Pope, who was the emblem of spiritual authority in the whole of civilized Europe.

The result was that while more and more Norman churchmen were invited to England as bishops and abbots, the House of Godwin came to represent the Anglo-Saxon way of life as opposed to the Norman. It is perhaps too much to say that feeling ran high among the common people against the sovereign, because the common people had not yet gained an effective voice in the State and few, if any, of them can have appreciated what was happening. It is nevertheless undeniable that the Saxon earls were biding their time until the throne should be vacant and that they had every reason to be dissatisfied with the sovereign, especially when Edward began rewarding his Norman courtiers with grants of English land.

On Edward's death the Witan duly named Harold, the late Earl Godwin's son, as King, but the country was so precariously balanced that civil war was almost inevitable. The memory of a Danish king on the throne was still in the minds of many of the nobles. Few visible traces remained of the Scandinavian tenure of the Danelaw, except perhaps in certain local customs, while the few Scandinavian settlers who had survived were fully absorbed into the Anglo-Saxon population. However, the depredations carried out by King Sweyn had left a permanent stamp on the countryside of eastern England. Moreover the collapse of Canute's kingdom at his death left an unsatisfactory position in that there was a permanent Scandinavian threat to the English throne and the descendants of King Canute were prepared to make an all out

effort to conquer England when a suitable opportunity offered itself.

This threat matured immediately after the death of King Edward the Confessor. King Harold's own brother, Tostig, refused to accept the Witan's decision to elect Harold and rather than acquiesce in Harold's sovereignty offered his support to Harold Hardrada, the Norwegian sovereign, in making an attack on England. Tostig as Earl of Northumbria had proved an incompetent ruler and a petty tyrant. That he had been deposed from his office was proof positive of his lack of authority, while Hardrada is pictured by medieval chroniclers as little better than a heathen savage. The Norwegians were traditionally brave fighters. Though they were routed by the Anglo-Saxons when they landed in northeast England, there is little doubt that the attack would have been renewed before long had not the efficient government of the Norman king and his barons made the cause a hopeless one.

There was yet one more cloud on the Anglo-Saxon horizon. During the last few years of Edward's reign Harold as Earl of Wessex had been king in effect, if not in name, and had been powerful enough to supplant several of the Norman bishops with Anglo-Saxon churchmen. In doing so Harold had, of course, lost the Pope's blessing. Though he was not excommunicated, the most dreaded of all punishments in the Middle Ages, he was unable to count on the spiritual goodwill which was all-important to the development of medieval states. The appointment of the Saxon Stigand, who had little sympathy with Roman ways, as Archbishop of Canterbury was a particular affront to the Pope.

It is fantastic therefore to represent the Anglo-Saxon England of 1066 as a land flowing in milk and money, a country to which permanent peace had been restored. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the succession—and it is idle to speak of rightful succession in those times, even though the Normans were the first people in British history who found it necessary to justify their actions—the accession of William of Normandy to the throne of Anglo-Saxon England not only changed the course of Britain's social history but was the first step towards welding it into a strong and united country.

The Normans inherited a war-like tradition but their character

had been modified by cultural influences which had scarcely
affected the Anglo-Saxons. Norman William was a direct descen-
dant of the Viking warriors who had carried war into the kingdom
of the Franks and had settled in a relatively small area which be-
came the Dukedom of Normandy. In a sense, therefore, William
was akin to King Canute and to the Viking strain in the population
of northern and eastern England. In all other respects he and his
followers were foreign in their ideals and in their way of
living.

The Vikings of Normandy had been quick to assimilate the
relatively advanced culture of the neighbouring Frankish king-
dom, which itself, partly no doubt because it was geographically
near to Italy, the cultural centre of the medieval world, was one
of the most advanced kingdoms in Europe. Bertha, a Frankish
princess, whom King Ethelbert of Kent had married, was
responsible for the invitation to the Pope to despatch St. Augustine
to convert the English. That is a token of the cultural lead which
the Franks had over the peoples of northern Europe, including
England—a lead which they did not lose for many centuries.

Against this background it does not seem so surprising that
Edward the Confessor, having been brought up in Normandy,
elected to surround himself with Norman courtiers, statesmen,
and churchmen.

As we shall see in later chapters, the Norman castle is the symbol
of Norman technique in the arts of war inherited from the Vikings,
the churches and the abbeys the symbols of their civilizing influ-
ence. The Normans introduced the idea of efficient planning and
staff work, whether in war or in peace. As is so well shown by
their disposition of castles, they were prepared to study the science
of strategy whereas the Anglo-Saxons had been content in the
main to think in terms of tactics. If anyone doubts the admirable
staff work of the Norman invaders he need only look to the
medieval account of the landing in Kent in 1066, an account which
bears the hallmark of truth and is supported by the visible evi-
dence of the Bayeux tapestry. William led his army ashore on the
coast near Hastings and having won his bridgehead with little or
no opposition immediately erected a prefabricated castle, the
essential timber parts of which had been packed in huge barrels in

Anglo-Saxon Builders. The Anglo-Saxons were traditionally builders in timber. Few secular buildings in stone are attributed to them. One of these few, however, is Corfe Castle (*right*), where many critics claim that Anglo-Saxon workmanship can still be traced in spite of subsequent rebuilding. The church of Greensted juxta Ongar in Essex (*below*) is the only surviving timber-built church of Anglo-Saxon days. Here the walls of the nave are composed of the split trunks of oak trees

Rochester Cathedral from the Castle Keep

Norman ships. All that had to be done was to dig the trenches for the earthworks, the moat and the mound; the prefabricated parts of the palisade and of the timber fortress to cap the mound were ready to hand.

Having thus secured his bridgehead, William marched a few miles west to Pevensey and there in the sure protection of the mouldering walls of the Roman Fort of the Saxon Shore awaited the coming of Harold. He knew that the English sovereign could not afford to delay while a foreign contingent was on English soil. That represents fine organization and staff work of a high order, even by modern standards.

The methods used by William in pacifying the English were equally efficient. He behaved in general not as a conqueror but as a deliverer, a technique only too well known in modern resettlements arising out of the world-wide conflicts of the twentieth century. Though the status of the Saxon nobility was degraded and their land parcelled out among the barons who had followed William into war, great care seems to have been taken to ensure that the productivity of the soil would not be decreased and that there should be no break in the farming routine of ploughing, sowing, and reaping. It does not alter the picture if it is pointed out that William's devastation of the north put back the farming clock there by a generation. He must have been advised that the rebellion might spread and the only way to prevent a conflagration was to stamp out ruthlessly the fire at its source. There is not the slightest evidence that the Anglo-Saxon people at large, who at all material times vastly outnumbered the Normans in England, were treated less well than when there had been an Anglo-Saxon king on the throne. Moreover, William wisely used the Church to assist him in his policy of pacification, not only by initiating the construction of fine cathedrals (Chapter 3) but by introducing Norman cells into the heart of the English countryside through the foundation of abbeys and priories throughout the length and breadth of the land (Chapter 6).

In brief, the Normans stood for organization on a national scale, where before it had been on a strictly local one. They were successful not only in holding the Anglo-Saxon people in check but in introducing Norman ideals in the only ways

that it was open to them to use. Any estimate of the character and work of William must take account of these undisputed facts.

The New Forest in Hampshire is a reminder of a different phase of William's reign. This forest, or to be more precise this area set aside as a royal chase and excluded from (*foris*) the application of the ordinary law of the land, was designated together with a number of other areas during the reign of the first Norman king. Prejudice dies hard and the creation of the New Forest is still advanced as evidence of the insensate ruthlessness of the 'conqueror'. Much ink has been used in arguing for and against the proposition as propounded by medieval historians, that the creation of the New Forest resulted in the dispossession of many peaceful Anglo-Saxon farmers and the destruction of many flourishing villages. The truth is—and the chief evidence is the Domesday Survey—that only a few Anglo-Saxon settlements were depopulated and a few others came under the forest laws. The forest laws, which included such harsh penalties as execution or blinding for interference with the King's beasts, especially deer and wild boar, may seem severe and indeed by modern standards would be considered intolerable, but the fact remains that whole counties, such as Essex, were administered under the forest laws so that the special hardships inherent in the creation of the New Forest must have been grossly exaggerated. Where villages were depopulated it was almost certainly because the land surrounding them was incapable of further exploitation, and there were vast areas of more fertile countryside still available outside the limits of the forest to which the people could be moved with ultimate advantage to the national economy.

Similar arguments arose during the resettlement of the northern highlands, when crofting villages were moved bodily from the highland valleys to sites along the north coast. It is agreed that this move was to the ultimate benefit of the crofters, who exchanged a wet and cloudy climate for a relatively dry and sunny one, and intractable land for more amenable terrain, together with the possibility of fishing to enhance their standard of living. Yet the outcry raised was terrific and reverberated not only in Scotland but as far as Westminster. What was a well-conceived but poorly

administered plan became in the eyes of many people a national scandal.

So it must have been in Norman times. The movement of a few score of families from the mixture of heavy clay and barren sandy soil of the New Forest to the more fertile and sunnier countryside of the Avon valley and of the coastal strip that lay to the south probably struck William and his advisers as a perfectly harmless and even useful reform, quite apart from the creation of a highly suitable area for hunting (it must be remembered that hunting in medieval England was not solely a sport but a valuable means of procuring fresh meat for the tables of the nobility and their retainers). Yet the resettlement was seized upon by the historians of later centuries in whose eyes the Normans were the usurpers of the Anglo-Saxon heritage as a first-class example of the cruelty and wantonness of the Norman rulers.

The medieval forests formed a much larger part of England than most people suppose. Some estimates place the proportion of forest land to cultivated land as high as 40 per cent., but these are rather inaccurate since within many forest areas, such as the Forest of Essex, there were considerable oases of cultivation. However, the majority of the forests as designated under Norman rule (many, of course, dated back to Anglo-Saxon times) were utterly barren, such as the Forest of the High Peak and the Forest of Skiddaw— and not only barren but treeless. The medieval forest (derived as we have seen from the Latin word *foris*) was not necessarily a wooded area, as we think of a forest today. Even the New Forest was probably far less wooded at that time than it is now when part of it has been enclosed and the sandy soil has proved highly suitable for the growth of coniferous trees. The Forest of Essex was certainly well wooded. So was the Forest of Sherwood, though not so densely wooded as it is today, and the Forest of Arden which covered most of Warwickshire. But, in general, forests were either tracts of sandy soil too porous for intensive medieval cultivation and unproductive even of timber at a time when the ubiquitous conifers and especially the Sitka spruce of the Forestry Commission were unheard of in England, or equally barren tracts of peat hag and bog in the uplands of south-western England and the Pennine countryside.

Though the extent of the Norman and later medieval forests is not precisely known, and is chiefly inferred with no high degree of accuracy from the Domesday Survey or rather from omissions in that register of Anglo-Norman manors, it is fascinating to trace the areas which were densely wooded in early Anglo-Saxon times by the names of villages which have survived to the present day, by the 'dens' of Kent, for instance, which were all clearings in the primeval Forest of the Weald, or by the 'hursts', which are as numerous in the Midlands and south central England as they are in the wealden area (Chapter 2).

The over-all picture, then, which emerges of the Norman organization of Anglo-Saxon England is a favourable one, and one which demonstrates real material and moral progress. In view of this it is sad to chronicle the events of the hundred years which followed the death of William I, a period in which there is little to show that English sovereigns or their advisers made any successful attempt to build on the firm foundations which William had laid. In this case modern research confirms the estimate of medieval historians—that most of the sovereigns were weak or tyrannical, and most of the nobility anxious only to enrich themselves at the cost of their subjects or, as often happened, at the cost of their sovereign. The dual themes of internecine struggle and oppression run through the whole story. Though material and commercial progress was made, it benefited few except the noble families, while the lot of the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon husbandmen, and still more of the serfs, showed no corresponding improvement.

The trouble started almost as soon as King William II succeeded to the throne. William II was nicknamed Rufus (the Red), not as so many have supposed because of red hair or beard but because of his ruddy complexion and bloodshot eyes—both, it is believed, the result of over-indulgence in rich food and strong drink. His political troubles surprisingly were due in the first instance to the disaffection of high-ranking members of the Church. It is, of course, wrong to think of the bishops of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as being devoted wholly to the ways of peace and culture. Bishop Odo, whose great reputation for godliness throughout northern Europe was founded on his tenure of the Episcopacy of

Bayeux, was in the forefront of the fighting when William landed on English soil. He was duly rewarded by William for his service and during the following twenty years became one of the most powerful barons as well as one of the leading churchmen in the State.

William I had negotiated with the Pope the appointment of Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury to replace the Saxon Stigand, and it was Lanfranc who inspired the Witan to name William Rufus as the rightful successor to the throne. There was no love lost between Lanfranc and Odo, who elected to support the claims of William's elder brother, Robert of Normandy, a fact which resulted in the first of the so-called barons' wars, culminating in a famous siege of Rochester Castle.

So long as Lanfranc was alive, however, the dice were loaded in favour of William Rufus, if only because Lanfranc held the confidence of the international Church of Rome and with his remarkable gift for diplomacy served loyally both his sovereign and the Pope. It was largely through his influence that the fusion of the Saxon and Norman elements in England made such rapid strides. It was a sign of the times, too, that Lanfranc and William depended on the loyalty of the English, that is, the Anglo-Saxon people, to help them overcome the revolt of the Norman barons and their retainers. It availed Robert nothing that he sent a powerful fleet and military auxiliaries to help Odo and the other barons in revolt. The sheer weight of numbers of the English militia which was freely at the disposal of the Norman king was too great for them. No fact could be more illustrative of the remarkable progress which had been made in less than a quarter of a century in pacifying the English.

It was William Rufus's own fault that his reign ended in tragedy and disaster. When Lanfranc died nothing went right for him. This was partly because for a period of four years the Archbishopric of Canterbury was left vacant. William appears to have been unable to agree a suitable candidate with the Pope, or perhaps the temptation to divert to his own treasury the revenues of the archbishop's see was too great for him to resist. In any case, he finally agreed to the nomination of Anselm as archbishop but failed to return, as he had promised, to the Church the property

and revenue which he had been putting to his own use since the death of Lanfranc. The inevitable result was that he lost the sympathy of the papacy. That is the reason most probably why when he was killed during a hunting expedition in the New Forest, either accidentally by a stray arrow from the bow of Sir Walter Tyrrell or as a result of a carefully conceived plot against his life, his body was trundled in a cart to Winchester and there buried without any of the religious ceremony commonly associated with the burial of a sovereign.

The twelfth century, if it had not been for the prolonged periods of anarchy at home, might have been a time of even greater expansion than the eleventh. The crusades exerted a major influence in bringing the Anglo-Norman people into closer contact with the civilizations of the Near East. Though they were restricted in their formal purpose to the deliverance of the Holy Land from the infidel, indirectly they fabricated a chain of events which varied the course of history long after the idea of a holy war had ceased to be in men's minds. They provided, for instance, a major preoccupation for members of the nobility who had been trained in the craft of war but found little opportunity of using their training constructively in England or Normandy. So in a sense they changed the venue of war from northern Europe to a more distant arena. That was all to the good in a world in which the equilibrium established by William I had already been sorely taxed.

Unfortunately, in the intervals between the several crusades, when the warriors returned home, they, and more especially their retainers, were permanently in search of an opportunity to aggrandize themselves at the expense of their sovereign or other members of the aristocracy who had not accepted the challenge to go to war with the Saracens. But these returning warriors brought back something far more important in its results than added experience of warfare. They brought back with them glowing accounts of the ways of life in other countries. They helped to introduce, for instance, more advanced principles of military engineering, so that the English castle of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was a far stronger instrument, whether of offence or defence, than its Norman counterpart. They also helped to open

up trade routes between England and Normandy on the one hand, and the countries on the borders of eastern Europe on the other. These trade routes in turn resulted not only in the exchange of goods but in the fusion of ideas.

At home one vital effect of the crusades was to bring greater freedom to the growing towns of England and Normandy. Often it was essential for barons or knights who proposed, always at their own expense, a warlike journey to the Holy Land to raise money to equip their following. This was generally achieved by the sale of charters, and these charters constituted in many cases the basis on which later municipal government was founded.

Incidentally, the first crusade allowed Henry I to usurp the throne on the death of William Rufus, in the absence of his brother Robert, who would normally have succeeded. When the barons returned from the crusade, they became restive at what they considered the harsh government of the sovereign. Like William Rufus, Henry appealed with some success to the English people to support him in his struggle against them, promising the people, as always, a return to the laws and customs of 'King Edward' (i.e. Edward the Confessor) and wooing the Church by a solemn covenant to abstain from raiding Church property or diverting to his own treasury the proceeds of bishoprics or abbacies which were for the time being vacant.

Henry cemented his alliance with the Church by rewarding Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had left the country in high dudgeon during the last years of William Rufus's reign. He propitiated the Anglo-Saxon elements in the country by his marriage to a British princess, who is generally known as 'good' Queen Maud.

Thus the process of fusion between Saxon and Norman was carried a step farther, and some further progress was made also in the bringing of Scotland within the Anglo-Norman sphere of influence, since Maud was a daughter of the King of Scotland. Normandy, too, was added to the kingdom when Robert led an expedition against England nominally to support the barons in their conflict with the throne. Robert was utterly routed, his army so completely demoralized that Henry felt justified in carrying the war into the enemy's camp. He invaded Normandy,

carried all before him, and was accepted perforce by the Norman barons as their overlord.

That was virtually the end of internal conflict during the reign of Henry I, but it had been prolonged and severe enough to undermine much of the good work which had been done in earlier reigns. However, with the introduction of skilled Flemish weavers into west Wales a start, however small a one, was made on the long process of development which ended by England becoming one of the chief wool-manufacturing countries of the world. Moreover, the colonies of Flemish weavers in Pembrokeshire and Gower soon became wholly anglicized and maintained the English tradition in a countryside which was permanently threatened by the Welsh hill tribesmen.

Whatever retrogression there may have been during the reign of Henry I, it was nothing compared with the disasters which overtook England during the following reign, that of Stephen, the greater part of which was occupied by a long though rather indecisive war between the sovereign and Matilda, a rival claimant to the throne. The rights and wrongs of the dispute have no bearing on this story. All that concerns it is the long period of anarchy which undermined most of the social reforms dating from the Norman occupation.

This period is described as one of anarchy not only on account of the war between Stephen and Matilda, but because many of the Norman tenants-in-chief, the descendants of those who had been rewarded for their service with grants of land by William I, took the opportunity offered by the lack of a strong central government to encroach on each other's provinces. For a time there were half a dozen wars in progress within the kingdom. The more peaceful and enlightened landowners who wanted anything but war were constantly in peril of being attacked by their neighbours for no reason except that they coveted their lands. In such circumstances further development of the agricultural potential of the country was impossible and many manors which were wasted by armies fighting over them did not recover their prosperity for the better part of a century.

The great landowners—laymen and churchmen alike—used whatever resources were available to them in building castles or

strengthening existing ones rather than in developing the country-side. For the first time since the Norman occupation famine cast its dark shadow over the land and with famine came disease, the forerunner of the Black Death. In those far-away days existence was always from hand to mouth. A bad harvest might spell disaster for a village community, but in a time of such disorganization famine ceased to be linked with a bad harvest. Its spectre stalked over the countryside whenever an army was on the march. It became all the more imminent when thousands of mercenary troops, hired by the barons to assist them in their struggles with the Crown and with each other, lived off the land, their claims inevitably taking precedence over those of the village people. Moreover, when the mercenaries were disbanded there was a tendency for them to stay where they were and earn their living as hired labourers. Thus were forged the first links in the chain which ultimately destroyed the feudal system, based as it was on the idea of mutual service rather than on that of hired labour.

There was little cause for mourning when King Stephen died. A great welcome greeted King Henry II, who it was hoped by all estates in the land would provide the firm authority which was so obviously needed if England were to become an important partner in the comity of European nations which owed allegiance to the Pope. In the event Henry II achieved all that could possibly have been expected of him and in spite of a disastrous episode involving the murder of Thomas Becket, in which he may well have had no part, he restored England to something approaching its former greatness.

Coming to the thone at the age of twenty-one, he ruled for thirty-five years. His first act was to diminish the power of the land-owning families, who had proved beyond any shadow of doubt that they were far from immune to the corruption that power is said to engender. Since in the twelfth century it was impossible for a government situated in London to rule effectively over northern and western England, owing to the slowness of communication, Henry was inhibited from making any major changes in the feudal system of land tenure. He could not afford to reduce the military strength of the barons whose castles in Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire were the

only bulwarks of defence against attack from Wales. What he did
—and his authority was sufficient to ensure that his command
would be carried out—was to order the demolition of over a
thousand castles, many of which had been raised during the
anarchy of the previous reign. In a sense Henry had the same
vision as Oliver Cromwell, though in very different circumstances.
To Cromwell the castles were a potential obstacle to the fulfilment
of democratic ideas; to Henry they were the means of enhancing
the military power of the barons, which was far too great for the
peace of mind of the sovereign.

Such was the contribution which Henry made to internal peace.
At the same time by force of arms he made England the nucleus
of a powerful European empire which at its greatest extent in-
cluded not only Normandy but rather more than half of France
(some parts inherited, others acquired by marriage, still others by
war), the southern half of Scotland, and most of Ireland.

The episode of Thomas Becket, although it could not negative
all the acts of Henry's firm and enlightened sovereignty, did have
one result which influenced the course of English history right
down to Tudor times. It effectively increased the influence of the
Pope on the affairs of state in England. Becket had been elevated
to the highest secular office by Henry and had proved himself a
man of enormous energy and skill, performing the duties of
Chancellor with an acumen which was rare in those days. It was
only natural, therefore, that when the see of Canterbury fell vacant
Henry should seize the opportunity of uniting the highest office of
the Church with the highest office of State, if only because it was
normal for the Archbishop of Canterbury to be the sovereign's
chief adviser.

As a medieval chronicle says, Becket was ordained priest today
and consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury tomorrow. But the
King's hopes of being able to order the thought and actions of his
new Archbishop were soon dashed to the ground. Once Becket
had been appointed Archbishop and had received the blessing of
the Pope he determined to serve the Church as loyally as before he
had served the sovereign. When the interests of the two were at
variance he invariably used his influence on behalf of the Church.

He soon became extremely unpopular in Court circles, not

perhaps so much with the King as with his entourage of barons and knights. There is no doubt that the murder of the Archbishop on the sacred stones of Canterbury Cathedral was the crime of some of the King's favourites, though probably not directly instigated by the King. The murder of an archbishop, the most sacred person in medieval England, was a calamity without parallel. The sovereignty itself was immediately in peril and the King threatened with excommunication.

Henry, with consummate statesmanship, avoided the worst consequences of this insensate murder, but he was forced publicly to do penance for what was obviously a crime committed by his friends. In so doing he committed himself, and incidentally his kingdom, more deeply than ever before into the hands of papal authority. The Pope's authority had been considerable since the time of William I. Now it became consummate and remained the most powerful influence in English history until the time of Henry VIII.

There was another consequence also, less important in the unfolding of English history but far more important in the story of the English people. The shrine of Thomas Becket canonized as St. Thomas of Canterbury became the most famous of those to which regular pilgrimage was made, and pilgrimage became one of the most important factors in the national life. Many thousands of people journeyed each year from London and other towns in the south-east to Canterbury. There and in scores of other places the existence of a shrine raised in honour of a man who had been canonized, for whatever reason, became a major source of wealth for the abbey or cathedral in which it was built.

The pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas became the most popular of all English pilgrimages and catering for the pilgrims became a major industry of Kent. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* have made this particular pilgrimage immortal, but the pilgrimage to Canterbury was exceptional only because St. Thomas was a man of London and in his lifetime preferred to be known as Thomas of London, whereas the many other saints whose mortal remains became the objects of pilgrimage were not associated with a town as large as London.

Pilgrimage was a kind of holiday in the Middle Ages. That

appears from the record of Chaucer. It represented in fact the only kind of holiday recognized in the Middle Ages apart from special celebrations on Holy Days, such as Christmas and Easter. Chaucer is our interpreter of medieval pilgrimage, the chief contemporary writer whose work has been bequeathed to the present. But there is no doubt that pilgrimage stood for a happy combination of religious feeling or piety and a natural desire for a holiday or change of surroundings. That is borne out by the fact that it created an industry, as important an industry in the context of medieval life as the modern tourist industry. The prior of Christchurch, Canterbury, opened hostels in the town to cater for the needs of the pilgrims, and derived a fine profit from operating what were virtually guest-houses. Some of the profit, no doubt, found its ways into the coffers of the priory, but certainly a part went into the pockets of successive priors. In his own way a prior or abbot was a big business man.

One of the most serious setbacks to the monastic movement occurred when pilgrimage declined in favour. Many abbeys and priories which had continued to flourish chiefly on the presents and grants made by pilgrims had to cope with diminished revenues with little expectation of supplementing them from other sources.

It is equally true that the pilgrimage movement was the progenitor of the English inn. The guest-houses founded by the prior of Christchurch in Canterbury were paralleled by similar foundations in many other towns. Such is the conservatism of sites, that a few have survived as hotels to the present day. 'The George' at Glastonbury, 'The George' at Norton St. Philip, and 'The New Inn' at Gloucester are three examples which spring to mind. The fabric of 'The George' both at Glastonbury and Norton St. Philip dates back to pre-Reformation days, and these are perhaps the only two inns in Britain which can be said with assurance to link the story of pilgrimage hostelries with that of modern hotels. Some hotels, such as 'The Angel and Royal' at Grantham, may have a fabric as old as either of these, and a history which goes back farther in time, but few, if any, have as long a continuous history as hostelries. 'The Tabard Inn' at which Chaucer's pilgrims gathered is marked only by an inscription on a wall at the junction of the

Old Kent and New Kent Roads, but 'The George' Inns at Glastonbury and at Norton St. Philip are still-present reminders of this first phase of the history of English inns.

The twelfth century was a time when the addition of Ireland to the English realm was constantly in the minds of the Government. Henry II was granted a Bull by the Pope in 1154 authorizing him to annex Ireland to the English dominions. This Bull showed rather special favour to Henry, but that is not surprising when it is recalled that the Pope, Adrian IV, was an Englishman, Nicholas Breakspeare, the only Englishman who has ever held the title of Pope.

Nicholas Breakspeare must have been a man of enormous personality to be elected Pope by the Papal College, which has always been predisposed to elect an Italian. But once elected, he showed considerable favour to his native country. In giving Henry papal dispensation for the conquest of Ireland he gave as his reason the ignorance of the Christian faith among the Irish people. That was scarcely fair since Ireland had been one of the greatest supporters of Christianity and had kept it alive during the centuries of warfare which had followed the end of the Roman occupation of Britain, while Scotland and northern England had learned the essentials of the Christian faith from missionaries despatched from Ireland.

It was certainly true that Ireland was in a state of semi-permanent unrest. Though it was a Christian country when Anglo-Saxon England was heathen, it did not progress as rapidly in thought as England after the time of King Alfred. It was divided into numerous petty kingdoms, and there were states of Norse origin centred on Dublin and Cork. So it was possibly for the greater good of Ireland that it should have a single overlord and the 'conquest' authorized by Pope Adrian was a step in the right direction as far as the Irish people were concerned but not for the reasons stated.

Henry, with a small army, sailed to Ireland in 1171 and was accepted as overlord of all its kingdoms without a single battle. However, that did not mean the true conquest of Ireland, which remained part of the British dominions for centuries without being effectively brought into the British sphere of influence. It was one thing to accept an English king as overlord, quite another to

accept the English way of life, or effectively to become part of the
Anglo-Norman kingdom. The struggle for Ireland was still going
on in the time of Cromwell.

Meanwhile in England the feudal system was declining. The
body blow at the system was the institution of scutage, a principle
by which knights could contract out of their obligation to provide
armed horsemen to follow their barons into war by the payment of
a sum of money. Later by the same principle the lowliest orders in
the feudal system could contract out of their obligations by pay-
ment of a sum in cash to their lords and masters.

The world as we know it today was beginning to emerge from
the dark age of medieval England. The sovereign might still be
supreme but his supremacy was dependent on the goodwill of his
followers. The feudal system of land tenure might still be the
accepted method of English life, but once the principle of scutage
was introduced it had little meaning. If the knight could fulfil his
obligations to the baron by a payment of money, the villein could
similarly discharge his obligation to his knight. The old loyalties
were dying rapidly.

London by now was the capital of all England. Under Alfred
and his successors Winchester had been the capital; even at the
time of the accession of William of Normandy Winchester was
still the nominal capital though London, growing apace, had
become the commercial and financial centre of the country. A
disastrous fire reduced Winchester to a shadow of its former self, a
vivid illustration of the fact that fire was the greatest enemy of all
medieval cities. Even so, it was to the benefit of England as a
whole that London should become its capital, for it was becoming
increasingly a focal point of continental trade. The growing port
of London enhanced its political importance, while the trade
guilds enhanced in their turn its commercial pre-eminence.

During the ten years of the reign of Richard I, from 1189 to 1199,
the importance of London and the other commercial towns
became still greater. Richard spent only six months of the ten
years in England. Most of his time as sovereign was spent on
active service on the Third Crusade, but this Crusade, like the two
which had preceded it, involved vast expenditure of money. The
only way in which the sovereign, like his predecessors, could raise

funds to finance his holy war was by selling charters to the towns. So the growth of London was paralleled by that of many other English towns, and a commercial class began to emerge which had no loyalty to the Anglo-Norman aristocracy.

Many towns began to be divided into three parts, like Canterbury, one part belonging to the sovereign, one to the Church, and one without argument to the burgesses. That was a very important step in the march towards democratic government. In a sense it entailed a decrease in the influence both of the sovereign and of the Church on the lives of the common people. The bishops, however, and particularly the Archbishop of Canterbury, were still a formidable power in the land, perhaps to a greater extent than the sovereign. Moreover, the bishops and many abbots too were still statesmen. That is not so surprising when one recognizes the paramount influence in many modern states of the higher churchmen. It seemed natural for Archbishop Makarios to take an active part in the political life of Cyprus in recent years. This was a position little different from that ruling at the time when the Archbishops of Canterbury were acknowledged as the chief advisers of the sovereign especially since the property of the Church was quite separate from that of the State.

If this brief account suggests that the rule of the Anglo-Norman kings produced relative prosperity for the people of Britain, it is certainly true that the reign of King John undid all the good that had been done before his time and involved the loss of the prestige of the monarchy as well as making the English sovereign a vassal of the Pope. That the kingdom of Normandy was lost during King John's reign was a comparatively small matter. Moreover, the Great Charter (Magna Carta) was not in the least a declaration of the rights of the English people, however important it was in British history. It was a charter intended to improve relations between the barons and the sovereign. The people had no part in it. The voice of the people was not really heard for another two hundred years, although increasingly the aristocracy came to have some regard for the rights of the common people who were virtually in their charge.

Magna Carta was an instrument designed to lessen the power of the sovereign over his barons rather than one planned to alleviate

the wrongs of the people. However Magna Carta made it plain
that a middle class was growing to maturity in the body politic.
The Mayor of London was one of the signatories to the charter.
That was a major innovation, for the Mayor, soon to be known as
Lord Mayor, was a representative of the middle class which had
arisen since the Norman occupation.

During the reign of Henry III, which lasted from 1216 to 1272,
this middle class became all-powerful. By the end of the reign the
sovereign and the nobles, who were still the most important
landowners in the country, were prepared to pay token regard to a
group of citizens of the large towns if only because they had
gained control over the markets and the industrial activity of the
country.

The reign of Henry III, incidentally, witnessed the heyday of
the English castles. However much Henry as sovereign may have
suspected the influence of the hereditary barons ensconced in their
castles, he had to recognize that the strongholds of some barons,
such as that of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, at Kenil-
worth, were a power in the land and a power which he as sovereign
was unable to break except by force of arms.

The course of the barons' war in this reign proved that the
sovereign was now in a position to quell an insurrection, but that
the cost of doing so was very great. The King was forced into a
position of having to hire mercenary troops from abroad and in
order to secure the token allegiance of the growing towns was
compelled to grant them still more favourable charters. In general
sentiment the towns, including London, were on the side of de
Montfort, and it was a tribute to the growing organization of the
monarchy that Henry was able finally to contain a situation fraught
with danger not only to himself but to the stability of the English
sovereignty.

The development of the towns at this time was presenting a real
social problem. Already in the thirteenth century there was a
marked tendency for the drift of undesirable characters, mostly
unemployed labourers, from the country to the towns. That was
an important sign of the times in that it reflected the beginning of
the breakdown of the feudal system. Among these new and un-
wanted inhabitants of the towns there were many who had

Heath Chapel in Shropshire. This is one of the most perfect of the early Norman churches which have not been altered materially. The columns and moulding of the doorway are especially good

Worcester Cathedral from the Bridge. Worcester Cathedral, close by the banks of the River Severn, represents almost every phase of English architecture, and still dominates the ancient town as it did in the Middle Ages

The Tower of Fingest Church. Something of the massiveness as well as of the artistry of Norman workmanship is reflected in this unusual church set in a valley of the Chiltern Hills

escaped from serfdom and hoped to find sanctuary in the anonymous surroundings of the towns. The result was that not only London but many of the provincial towns also, such as Worcester, York, and Southampton, became uncomfortably crowded and filled with beggars and footpads, many of them diseased, some suffering from the dreaded leprosy, with which the town authorities seemed to be quite unable to cope.

Even so, prosperity was on the increase and the standard of living was still rising gradually. The population had increased since Norman times from about two million to between three and four million. Merchant bankers from Lombardy had settled in London and were beginning to take the place of the Jewish banker-moneylenders who had proved so unpopular. More and more Flemings were settling, chiefly in the eastern counties, especially in London and Norwich, bringing with them inherited skills in cloth manufacture. They enhanced the already commanding position which England held in the world markets for woollen cloth.

An important landmark in the constitutional history of the country was the admission to Parliament of the Knights of the Shire and elected representatives of the big towns. In 1265 the House of Commons was separated from the House of Peers, a step which marked most effectively the emergence of the constitution by which the country has been governed ever since, with its three distinct authorities—those of the Sovereign, the Lords, and the Commons.

All subsequent constitutional history has been concerned with the limitation of the powers first of the Sovereign and later that of the Lords, and the increase of the authority of the Commons. At least during the reign of King Henry III the foundations of the definitive constitution of the country were well and truly laid. It was apparent to everyone also that the farmers and landowners would not in future hold a monopoly of the right to direct the nation's fortunes. The bankers, the merchants, and the manufacturers, in brief, all engaged in trade, commerce, and industry, would wield increasing authority. It is a lasting tribute to the conservatism of established institutions that the land-owning class, representing only an insignificant minority of the people as a

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whole, should have retained so much of their original influence right down to the present day.

The reign of Edward I, which lasted from 1272 to 1307, is noteworthy for three reasons. The King himself was responsible for the successful campaign against the Welsh which marked the first effective step towards the creation of Great Britain. Edward acquiesced, too, in the calling of the Parliament of 1295, which went farther in the way of reform than had Henry's last parliament, if only because it gave formal acknowledgement to the distinction between Lords and Commons and also gave recognition to a third estate, that of the clergy, whose influence in State affairs was still important and continued to be so until the Reformation. Edward may well have felt compelled to call this parliament at a time when the nation was at war simultaneously with France, Scotland and Wales, but at least he summoned it to good purpose and was granted votes of money by all three estates separately. Here, then, was a genuine beginning of co-operation between the sovereign and all the several other elements in the State for the common good.

The decision to name King Edward's son Prince of Wales was the third great event of the reign, and one which marked the beginning of a community of interest between England and Wales. The Welsh had been defeated in many pitched battles, great confidence was placed in the many fortresses (Chapter 10) which had been built or rebuilt to contain them, but faith was more fully justified in the ultimate results of this fine piece of statesmanship.

So the thirteenth century ended on a note of high hope. Unhappily, as had so often occurred before, much of the good which had been achieved was undone by the events of the following century to which the ineptitude of the sovereigns and the insensate ambition of members of the land-owning aristocracy contributed. The twenty years during which Edward II was king, from 1307 to 1327, were years of unending disquiet at home and of military reverses abroad. The defeat of Bannockburn was a severe blow to the sovereign's prestige. The King's ultimate deposition and murder is seen in retrospect as an almost inevitable end of a reign which had few compensations for the many disasters which the King and his favourites had brought on the country.

This was a time when violence was once more resorted to whenever there was disagreement, while hand in hand with violence the spectre of famine and disease was casting a shadow over the whole country. There was a succession of bad harvest years. In the absence of any method of transferring food to the hardest-hit areas many serfs and even some of the free farmers who made up the lower orders of the feudal system left the estates of landowners who were fully engaged in carrying on war with each other or with the King. They left in a state of semi-starvation, banded themselves together into gangs whose sole object at first was to find food, they roamed the countryside at will in the absence of even a rudimentary police system, until ultimately they found their way, as we have seen before, into the overcrowded towns.

The disaster of the Black Death added to the agricultural depression of the country. It was a plague, sometimes identified with influenza or a similar virus infection, which was at its worst in the winter of 1348 and 1349. It proved a calamity far more devastating than a series of bad harvest years. In the summer of 1348 the population of England is estimated at four million. One year later it is estimated at little more than two million. No part of the community was immune but the plague seems to have taken its greatest toll of the less prosperous workers on the land, though the records show that even among communities of monks the death rate in some cases approached 50 per cent.

The feudal system was showing many weak links before the time of the Black Death. The growth of the towns and the hope of a new life which they offered to 'refugees' from the country had undermined it. But the Black Death did more. It started a revolution in the agricultural economy and made it inevitable that the whole feudal system would disintegrate within a short space of time. There were no longer the workers on the land available to carry on the mixed farming which was the mainstay of most parts of eastern, central, and southern England. The wealthy landowners, whether descendants of the Norman barons, or leading churchmen such as the Abbot of Bury, were powerless. Labour could command its own price and it proved of little use for Parliament to pass laws forbidding the movement of workers from one estate to another, or limiting the wages for hired labour. There

was great competition for the services of any and every able-bodied man. The landlords were willing to pay extremely high wages in lieu of service if by so doing they could increase the productive capacity of their estates.

Many landowners, especially in eastern England and the Cotswold country, where much of the land was church land, turned over from arable to pastoral agriculture. Primarily this was because it took much less labour to tend flocks of sheep than to plough and sow and reap. Virtue came out of necessity and this change-over heralded the great woollen boom which changed the economic history of England and brought in its wake a long period of prosperity shared in by both landowner and labourer. England became the principal centre of wool production for Flemish weavers, while the English manufacturing industry increased apace and was encouraged by all subsequent sovereigns right down to the time of Queen Elizabeth I. The magnificent parish churches of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the fine merchants' houses and guildhalls mostly dating from Tudor times are our chief links with this period of expansion.

It was difficult for contemporary statesmen and critics to recognize the importance of this development, if only because the process was gradual and, as has so often happened, a trade boom was built up almost imperceptibly from a period of depression. In the fourteenth century and especially during the reign of Edward III (1327–77) the political atmosphere was gloomy, to put it at its most hopeful. One disastrous continental war followed another. In the end all that was left of the continental empire of which England had formed a part (but which historians always called English possessions overseas) was Calais and two other towns. In retrospect it is obvious that these losses on the continent redounded eventually to the strengthening of the English position, if only because in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was not a practical proposition to govern England, together with large areas scattered over what is now France. At the time, however, the loss of overseas possessions appeared a disaster, in comparison with which the woollen boom at home was insignificant.

Other results flowed indirectly from the Black Death. Though this was a period of great development in many directions, cul-

turally and scholastically, it is remembered chiefly as the period in which the seeds of the Renaissance and of the Reformation were sown. Wycliffe and the Lollards were in revolt against the overwhelming power of the Church of Rome. William of Wykeham founded Winchester College and was responsible for the fourteenth-century development of Oxford as a centre of learning. The year 1362 marked a change of the utmost significance, when an Act of Parliament was passed requiring the English language to be used in the law courts. Previously French had been the language of the literate layman, Latin that of the Church. Though the English language as it emerged was a strange mixture of modified Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French, at least a national language was coming to be recognized, a language, too, which was adopted by all classes in the community. Moreover an increasing number of laymen were receiving the rudiments of education, so that learning as such ceased to be a prerogative of the clergy. Thus the way was open for offices of state to be held by laymen, whereas previously they had been virtually monopolized by churchmen.

Among significant signs of the times was the gradual transition from castle to manor-house, reflecting a greater security in the land. This security was still shaken on occasion, especially by the people's risings, such as that led by Jack Straw and Wat Tyler in 1381. The purpose of these risings was to cut the final bonds of villeinage. They reflected the more powerful voice of the people at large, inspired to some extent by men like John Ball, who preached a new outlook on religion. That they were quelled without much difficulty is beside the point, for they were doomed to failure. In a sense they achieved their purpose by bringing home to the privileged the fact that the rights of the poor and unprivileged could no longer be neglected.

All these changes continued with ever-increasing impetus during the fifteenth century—and that in spite of the Wars of the Roses, which once more rent the country asunder. But the Roses War was in no sense a people's war. It was a long-drawn-out struggle between opposing groups of important landowners, a conflict between the powerful families of York and Lancaster which was resolved by Henry of Richmond's (King Henry VII's) victory at Bosworth. At no time were considerable forces engaged.

The work of the people in town and country continued throughout the period of hostilities without pause and almost without hindrance.

To the bulk of the working population the rebellion led by Jack Cade in 1450 was of far greater significance than the skirmishes and pitched battles of the Wars of the Roses. Though the rising instigated by Jack Cade was no more successful than that of Wat Tyler seventy years before, its objects were very similar and were concerned mainly with freeing the agricultural worker from legal obligation to his employer. Its real significance lay in the fact that Jack Cade drew the greater part of his 'army' from south-east England, including Kent, Surrey and Sussex, the richest part of England, and was successful in reaching London, defeating on his way at least one royalist general sent to intercept the insurgents. What is more, when promises were made that the rebels' complaints would be considered most of the insurgents were allowed to depart in peace and only Cade and a few other ringleaders were put to death.

The detail of this exciting story emerges in the last chapters of this book—the growth of the towns, the improvements in the amenities of the villages, the development of commerce, the amelioration in the lot of the labourers. There is abundant evidence of these changes in town and countryside, in the manor-houses and the cottage homes, in the guildhalls and the churches—evidence that this century was a period of economic development in which enlightenment was linked with a genuine improvement in the standard of living.

The translation of the Bible into English, the setting up of the first printing press by Caxton in 1477—these were milestones in the progress towards modern England. But they were no more than signs of the changing times. With the accession of Henry Tudor to the throne of England modern history began. That was the true beginning of the age of adventure which continued without recession throughout the sixteenth century which included the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. With the Renaissance and the Reformation medievalism died and the era of modern enlightenment began.

Anglo-Saxon England

THE heritage of Anglo-Saxon times judged in material terms is slight. That is partly because the Anglo-Saxons were builders in wood, and wood is more perishable than other materials. From 1,000 to 1,500 years of wear and tear have destroyed almost everything. In point of interest, though, the Anglo-Saxon heritage is considerable and adds enormously to our knowledge of the people who are rightly regarded as the fathers of modern England, in the sense that English people today are proud to call themselves Anglo-Saxons, even though there may be little Angle or Saxon blood in their veins.

The people of Anglo-Saxon England were not members of a single race, nor of two or three. They represented the fusion of many elements which retained their individuality in different parts of the country for hundreds of years but gradually became absorbed in each other's culture. Nevertheless the complete fusion of all the racial elements which made up Anglo-Saxon England did not take place until the nineteenth century, when the building of the railways and numerous other factors, especially the industrial revolution, brought one part of the country within easy reach of every other and so effectively ended the isolation in which many communities had lived for more than a thousand years.

That truth is illustrated best, perhaps, by the many Cornish fishing villages and the group of old-world coastwise villages sheltered by the cliffs of north Yorkshire. The Yorkshire moors and the hinterland of Cornwall were equally devoid of roads in the Later Middle Ages. In the absence of roads, communication between the coastal communities was exclusively by sea, and this in practice was negligible. So Norse villages such as Staithes and Runswick, and Celtic villages such as Polperro and Boscastle, continued to thrive with little change of racial strain, marriage between the young men and women of the village being the

general rule and the finding of a marriage partner outside the
village limits very much the exception.

In Cornwall there are traditions of giants and pigmies repre-
senting, perhaps, racial strains going back to prehistoric times.
It is significant that writers on Cornwall as late as the nineteenth
century commented freely on the exceptionally large stature of
people in some villages and the correspondingly small stature of
the people in others. Certainly even in places as near the Tamar
(the true boundary between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon England) as
Menheniot men under six feet three inches in height, and women
under five feet ten inches, were regarded as 'dwarfs' as little as
sixty years ago. This is all the more surprising when it is remem-
bered that the average height of Englishmen today, when an
improved standard of living has tended to encourage a larger
stature, is no more than five feet eight inches, and of English
women about five feet three inches.

This surprising conservatism of racial strain is not, of course,
confined to the Celtic and Norse elements of the population. There
is a tradition, unsubstantiated by definite evidence but still
probably true, that the crew of a Spanish galleon, a unit of the
Armada, shipwrecked in the English Channel, landed on the coast
at Beer, slew the small fishing community which existed there,
reprieving only the younger women, and settled in the homes of
the Englishmen they had killed. Baring Gould, writing at the
close of the last century (and supported by several other writers),
recorded that the population of the then much larger Beer showed
a startling preponderance of swarthy Spanish types. Since then
Beer has expanded still farther into a modest holiday resort with
its quota of 'foreign' boarding-house keepers, and others who
have been attracted in the present century to the rather unreward-
ing business of catering for holiday-makers. Even so, if today
one leans against the rail (which prevents the unwary from falling
over the cliff-side on to the slipway which leads down to the
beach) on an autumn day when the summer holiday-makers have
left, one need not stretch the imagination over-far to see among the
fisherfolk a number who would not appear out of place on the
Costa Brava.

If the material remains of the first few centuries of Anglo-Saxon

England are meagre, the peoples who came first as plunderers and later as colonizers wrote a record of their activities into the map of England which has persisted for all time. We can learn by careful study and interpretation as much about the settlement and expansion of Anglo-Saxon England from place names as by any other means. The Angles settled mainly near the east coast of England and are remembered by the name of East Anglia, a term which no longer has administrative significance as it had when it was the kingdom of the East Angles, but still describes geographically the area which they colonized—Norfolk, the land of the North Folk, Suffolk, the land of the South Folk, and the surrounding areas to the south and west. East Anglia was one of the best placed of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, because it was virtually an island within an island, protected on the north by the Wash, on the east by the North Sea, on the west by the impenetrable morass of the Fens, and on the south by the Forest of Essex, which at that time stretched from the valley of the Lea to the east coast.

The Saxons are remembered equally by the name Essex, the kingdom of the East Saxons, a small kingdom rather late in developing which started as a group of clearings in the forest land and only gradually extended westward until it included much of Hertfordshire as well as London, which at one time was its capital. So London became the see of the Bishopric of Essex. That is the reason why until the modern redistribution of episcopal authority the see of London included what are now the sees of St. Albans and Chelmsford.

Sussex was the kingdom of the South Saxons, Wessex that of the West Saxons. Wessex, like East Anglia, no longer has administrative significance but like East Anglia it has retained its geographical meaning, however loosely applied, as witness the novels of Thomas Hardy. The Saxons also colonized much of central and western England, which became the kingdom of Mercia, one of the few Saxon names which has disappeared completely from the modern map.

The Jutes were most active along the south coast. They were a people rather more cultured than the Angles or the Saxons. They colonized much of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and founded the kingdom of Kent. In view of their greater culture and their

developing links with the kingdom of the Franks, it is not surprising that when Christianity was introduced from Rome a king of Kent, Ethelbert, whose wife was the Frankish Princess Bertha, invited the Pope to send St. Augustine to convert the English.

Northern England in the early stages of Anglo-Saxon colonization was only thinly peopled but a kingdom of mixed Anglo-Saxon origin developed east of the Pennines. This was known as Northumbria, a name which is perpetuated in the modern county of Northumberland, though in its heyday it extended southwards to include Durham and much of Yorkshire, and northward as far as the Firth of Forth, where tradition relates that Edwin, a king of Northumbria, founded Edinburgh (Edwin's Burgh). To be precise, the derivation of Edinburgh is unknown, and there is no supporting evidence for the tradition, though equally there is nothing to prove it false.

The people of Roman Britain are generally known as Celts, though the term is a misnomer. The 'Britons' during the Roman occupation were just as mixed a race as that of medieval England. They were descendants of the peoples who had brought the relatively primitive cultures of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age to Britain. They included people of Belgic origin, and others who were descended from invading continental groups of non-Belgic origin. During the Roman occupation fresh strains were introduced, including some genuinely Roman or, more precisely, Italian ones, and others derived from discharged legionaries, who were recruited from almost every part of the Roman Empire.

So when we speak of Britons as the native people of England, we are referring to the mixed population which inhabited the province of Britain at the end of the Roman occupation rather than to any specific race. Celtic is as good a description as any, however unprecise. This 'Celtic' people was absorbed in part, even if as slaves, by the invading Angles, Saxons, and Jutes during the fifth and sixth centuries, but a large number gave ground before the invaders and established 'native' kingdoms in the far west— in Devon and Cornwall (West Wales) and in Wales itself and in north-west England. The kingdom of Strathclyde, which was divided from that of Northumbria by the bulwark of the Pennine

range, was essentially a Celtic one which at one time reached from the estuary of the Clyde southward to the Mersey.

It is probable that the Christian religion, which had spread across most of Britain during the last century of Roman government, was maintained throughout the Anglo-Saxon period in the far west and north at a time when the pagan Angles, Saxons and Jutes had swept it away from eastern and central England.

Many of the Celts or Britons migrated—some to Ireland, where Christianity was definitely maintained throughout the period and from which it spread back by way of Iona to northern England and southern Scotland, others under pressure from the westward-advancing Saxons migrated across the Channel to Brittany, which bears their name.

How far the Saxons penetrated into the south-western peninsula becomes clear from the place names of Devon and Cornwall, and more especially from the names of the saints to which the parish churches are dedicated. West of the Tamar most, but not all, of the churches are dedicated to Celtic saints. In Devonshire there is a mixture of Celtic and Roman saints but over the county as a whole definitely more Roman than Celtic. This reflects the fact that Cornwall never came under Anglo-Saxon influence—not even towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

A new strain was introduced into Anglo-Saxon England by way of what is generally known as the Viking invasion, although in fact the Vikings came, like the Angles and Saxons before them, first as pirates and plunderers and much later began to settle in eastern England and Scotland. Viking, too, like Celt is a rather unprecise term and is often used to describe the Danes from the northern mainland of Europe, as well as the brave but pagan warriors from Scandinavia.

It has been said before that the Anglo-Saxons wrote a record of their settlements on the map of England for ever. That is indisputably true, but there is more to it than that. The names of the villages founded by the Anglo-Saxon colonizers give us a clue to the kind of people who founded them and to the times at which they were founded. There is no doubt at all that the earliest period of colonization is represented by villages and towns which have the suffix 'ing' or 'ingham' when colonization was carried out by

small tribes or families. So Hastings represents a very early period of settlement, as does such an apparently modern town as Birmingham. By collating villages and towns with these early suffixes it is easy to see that the Anglo-Saxon invaders colonized first the areas on the outskirts of the forests which had not been cleared by the Romans, and other areas which for one reason or another had not been developed during the period of Romano-British government. Though these early Anglo-Saxon settlements were confined largely to places near the sea or the banks of rivers, and outside the area of the primeval forests, they still extended over the greater part of south-eastern England.

After the middle of the seventh century colonization was resumed and was carried out to an increasing extent within the forest lands. To that period must be attributed the long list of 'dens' and 'hursts', all places which by their names show that they were clearings within the forests. It is probable that the 'hams' and 'tons' were mostly earlier than the 'hursts' and 'dens' but the foundation and development of villages both inside and outside the forest continued simultaneously. The existence of a 'ham' or 'ton', however, does not necessarily imply a particularly early foundation, though the 'hursts' all represent the later period of development, and the 'dens' of Kent recall a local but by no means unique method of expansion dependent on the efforts of the younger sons of established landholders.

Although the study of place names is a complex one and there is as yet no absolute certainty about the relative age of several groups, the commonly accepted view is that whereas most of the 'ings', such as Hastings, and many of the 'tons' represent settlements made before A.D. 600, the 'leighs' and the 'dens' and the 'fields' stand for settlements made after A.D. 650, a period which also reveals a number of 'tons', since this termination continued to be used throughout the whole period of Anglo-Saxon settlement. It is clear also that the numerous 'boroughs' and many of the 'burys' are later than most of the previous groups, since some of them at least are derived from 'burh', a castle or fortified place of a kind which was not constructed until the latter part of the Anglo-Saxon period.

In many cases, however, the actual derivation is in doubt. Some

of the 'boroughs' or 'burys' for instance may be derived from 'beog', a hill, rather than from 'burh'. In the same way many place names ending in 'ham' certainly signify a hamlet but others are probably derived from 'hamm', which means a meadow. All, or at least most, of the 'tons' were originally enclosures, as were the majority of the 'worths'. 'Ley' or 'leigh' generally signifies a clearing in woodland but is sometimes also used to describe a settlement made in open country, since there are a number of 'leys' or 'leighs' in many parts of Britain where there is no evidence of any primeval forest.

In a few cases the Anglo-Saxon place names have an interest additional to that of the period of their foundation. They actually tell us something about the countryside as it was then. Buckhurst on the fringe of Epping Forest, for instance, means a beech wood, while the very many names which begin with 'Ac' represent settlements founded in oak country.

As the great forests gradually gave way to cultivated land, and the husbandmen brought more and more of the country under the plough, the Norse invaders of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries wrote the story of their attempt to wrest England from the English as clearly as the Anglo-Saxons had before them. The terminations 'thorpe' and 'by' are the two most commonly quoted as signifying Scandinavian settlements, perhaps because they are the most numerous. As we shall see, there are many others just as character- istic. The termination 'thorpe' is pre-eminently a Danish one, while 'by' is common to settlements made by all the Norse invaders, whether Danish or Norwegian.

A cursory glance at the map of Lincolshire or Yorkshire or Leicestershire, reveals the very large number of place names which end in 'by'. Even a comparatively small-scale map of twenty-five miles to the inch shows Grimsby and Willoughby, Spilsby, Saxilby and Wragby in Lincolnshire alone. A larger-scale map shows scores of towns and villages with this termination, especially in the area of the wolds.

With few exceptions the Danish 'by' towns are confined to the area to the north and east of Watling Street, the Roman road from London to Wroxeter which is paralleled for most of its route by the modern arterial road from London through St. Albans to

Shrewsbury. That fact also has a simple explanation in that when the Treaty of Wedmore was signed in 878 the Danes were left in undisputed possession of the eastern half of England, and the line of Watling Street was made for much of its length the formal division between the two parts of the kingdom.

The Norsemen, however, did not settle solely in eastern England. The Norwegians, in particular, made settlements round the north coast of Scotland and on the north-west coast of England, penetrating through the mountains into the Lake District; also in Ireland and south and west Wales. Their activities are betrayed by place names ending, for instance, in 'gill', which means a narrow valley, 'beck', which means a small river, and 'thwaite', which means a clearing. All these terminations are very common in the Lake District. Many others are significant, even though they are less common, such as 'scar', 'holm', and 'toft'. The 'tofts' have a special interest because of their wide distribution over northern England, from the East Riding of Yorkshire across the Pennines into Cumberland and Westmorland.

One might say with only a little exaggeration that the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Norsemen wrote the modern map of England. It is quite remarkable how difficult it is to find names which do not derive from one or other of these sources. The truth is that by the eleventh century the vast majority of modern towns and villages had been founded, even though the population at that time was not in excess of two millions, as it had been during the heyday of the Roman Province 800 years before—a total population, that is, which was not much greater than the present-day population of two large towns such as Birmingham and Manchester.

A corollary of these facts is that even in the towns which we regard as the most modern—great commercial centres like Birmingham, railway towns like Swindon, modern dormitory towns like Morden—there is very often an old church. Even in 'new' towns like Crawley there is usually a medieval church marking the position of a settlement not less than a thousand years old. Eighteenth-century prints depicting Birmingham, for instance, show it as a village closely grouped about a handsome church, with open fields stretching away in every direction where

now there is nothing but street after street of dwelling-places, shops, and factories.

The Normans made some alterations to the map of England but these were mainly in the form of additions. Tooting became Tooting Bec because the manor formed part of the territory allotted to the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. Yardley became Yardley Hastings because it was granted to the Hastings family. Higham became Higham Gobion for a similar reason. Whitchurch in Dorset became Whitchurch Canonicorum because it was granted to the Augustinian Canons. Melton became Melton Mowbray. Layer was divided and became respectively Layer de la Haye and Layer Marney. But these Norman additions to the map of England were insignificant compared with the marking which the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings had made. They were additions and nothing more, made only for convenience and frequently to distinguish one Anglo-Norman manor from another.

Archaeology has thrown a vivid light on the Anglo-Saxon period, as on all the periods that preceded it. The discovery of Saxon and Viking burial places has supplemented the knowledge obtained from place names and in almost every case has supported it, while the discovery of armour, domestic utensils, pottery, weapons and implements has given us a more or less complete picture of life as it was lived in those days. The results of this archaeological research can be seen in the London Museum, the British Museum, and many others. Traces have been found of several of the early village settlements, especially one at Selsey Bill, where the land has been eaten away by the sea until it has revealed the foundations of the village.

It is clear that the Anglo-Saxons lived in a way not very dissimilar from that of their prehistoric ancestors. The home of the common people is remarkably similar from whatever age it derives, whether from the Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age, or the Anglo-Saxon. The unit of such dwelling places in early villages was a small area scooped out of the earth, with stones used as foundations and a thatched roof supported by a central pole. That is a type of dwelling-place still largely used among primitive peoples in Africa and South America. It was certainly the type most commonly adopted in Anglo-Saxon England.

Light has been thrown on the homes of the more wealthy by the discovery of the palace of King Edwin of Northumbria near Wooler. This discovery was made by aerial photography and the site on excavation proved to be one of the most interesting and illuminating of all the discoveries which had been made in the field of Anglo-Saxon investigation. It proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the King's home and the noble's homes were similar in all respects except in point of size. The King's home was a rectangular hall. So were the homes of his lieutenants. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this discovery is that it relates to a royal establishment which can be dated precisely to the beginning of the seventh century. All the evidence suggests that however great material progress may have been made during the following three hundred years, relatively little change took place in the style of dwelling places, whether those of noblemen or commoners.

After this period, however, one major change affected the spirit of building. The change was brought about by the reintroduction of Christianity, partly through the efforts of St. Augustine and his assistants, partly through the missionary journeys which were made from Iona and Lindisfarne. Increasingly the accent was on religious building as opposed to secular. The homes of the people might, and indeed did, remain remarkably similar until the beginning of the Norman period, but the spur of religion urged on the Anglo-Saxons to ever-increasing efforts in sacred building.

In early days the building of churches of stone was virtually beyond the scope of the Anglo-Saxon communities. This was especially true in the north and west. There we find the so-called Celtic crosses in large numbers. In early days these took the place of the churches which were being built in the south and east, though they continued to be raised in smaller numbers for several centuries. Some of them, such as the two re-erected in the market square of Sandbach in Cheshire, show the consummate artistry of the people who designed them. Though the vast majority have suffered grievously from the ravages of time and men, enough survive to demonstrate that the sculptors who decorated them were fully cognizant of the current trends in Celtic art.

These Celtic crosses were raised generally at cross-roads, where all travelling along the roads would be reminded of the glory of

God. Others were built at the point where the way from the common fields led into the village community. Wherever they were raised they were essentially a reminder of God's majesty and something as closely linked with the daily life of the community as the formal church which later became the centre of worship.

Long and vigorous argument has raged round the Anglo-Saxon churches of England. Even now it is a matter of dispute how many were built in stone during the Anglo-Saxon period. There is no possible doubt, however, that the vast majority were of timber at least until the end of the tenth century. St. Augustine inspired the building of half a dozen churches of masonry in Kent at the beginning of the seventh century but these were built from Roman materials, largely from the bricks and rubble which formed the fabric of decayed Roman buildings. The Church of St. Martin in Canterbury may well have been one of the first Christian churches built after the end of the Roman domination of Britain, as legend implies. The Church of St. Pancras also certainly dates from the ministry of St. Augustine. Several others are believed to belong to this earliest period of Anglo-Saxon church-building. Even so, they represent an isolated effort.

No trace of the majority of timber-built churches has survived. Indeed, the church of Greensted juxta Ongar in Essex is quoted as the only example of an Anglo-Saxon timber church. That claim may well be true. Here the walls of the nave are composed of the split trunks of oak trees which were certainly hewn centuries before the Norman occupation. In recent years the oak has begun to decay and has been repaired with a metal infilling, but it is still true that the nave of Greensted is very similar in appearance to what it was at the time of its construction. For the rest, the churches of Anglo-Saxon England are remembered particularly by their towers. G. H. Cook claims that Anglo-Saxon work in stone is authenticated in more than three hundred modern parish churches.

Considering the lapse of time and the fact that both in the late-Norman period and again in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the majority of village churches were rebuilt or enlarged either to accommodate an increasing congregation or as acts of piety, it is remarkable that the remains of Anglo-Saxon (Romanesque) work

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is so varied and interesting. The stone church of St. Lawrence at Bradford-on-Avon, for instance, is pre-Conquest throughout, a building which between the Reformation and the nineteenth century suffered many vicissitudes but is now restored to what is very probably almost exactly its original appearance. It is a rather gaunt building—a nave and chancel separated by a high arch, with signs of two side chapels. Its chief interest, however, is that its sparse ornament shows signs of Byzantine influence and, therefore, bespeaks a growing communion between the civilized world of eastern Europe and that of Anglo-Saxon England.

There is no need to read more into this circumstance than the facts warrant, and the facts may be no more than that a Byzantine artist was employed in the decoration of St. Lawrence. But that fact alone is remarkable enough and gives the lie to the theory so firmly held at one time—and still occasionally revived—that the Anglo-Saxons even in the period of their greatest development may have been hardy colonists and hard-working farmers but had no time for the civilized ways of peace. Certainly they shared to some extent in the Christian arts which emanated from Ireland, and clearly had links with continental culture even before Edward the Confessor introduced a knowledge of Norman ways to the country.

CHAPTER THREE

To the Greater Glory of God

WHEN Norman William came to the throne of England, having achieved his triumph partly through the support of the Pope, religion in Britain became something more than a form of worship. It became, in fact, a cardinal point of government policy designed to unite the Anglo-Saxons with their Norman overlords, a civilizing force which was used persuasively by William and his successors in an attempt to bring a genuine unity to the many peoples who lived in England. In the previous chapter it was shown that the Anglo-Saxons adopted Christianity but lacked the resources to provide a full material expression of their faith. The Normans, however, organized the resources necessary for the building of churches, large and small, to the greater glory of God.

Edward the Confessor, more Norman in temperament and outlook than English, did a great deal towards establishing Norman ways and customs in England long before there was a Norman king on the throne. He was responsible for the rebuilding of the Abbey of Westminster, a work for which he engaged Norman master masons and in all probability a number of Norman workmen. The Abbey of Westminster was completed only within a few days of his death, but at least Edward lived to see his dream fulfilled, and it was the realization of this dream which was the chief reason for his subsequent canonization.

During his reign, and with his encouragement, a number of monastic churches and a few parish churches were rebuilt in stone under the supervision of Norman master masons, inspired no doubt by the installation of a Norman prelate in the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and in several other English bishoprics. When William I was accepted by the Witan as sovereign he began immediately the systematic rebuilding of the greater churches and cathedrals, not even allowing the pressing need to build castles to deter him from this work which was destined to make England

for a century the greatest centre of religious building in the world. This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the Norman kings saw clearly that the most important civilizing influences would be the abbeys and priories, the foundation and re-endowment of which they and their barons encouraged to the full.

Nevertheless, they were determined to demonstrate that the impossible was practicable, given sufficient enthusiasm and drive. Norman abbeys and priories, as shown in Chapter 6, were founded in great numbers, as were castles to defend the lines of communication and to hold the Anglo-Saxons in check, but all this work was carried out simultaneously with the rebuilding of the greater churches throughout the land.

The smaller parish churches had to wait until the major commitments of the Norman régime had been met. But if the Norman period had to be judged alone on the building of cathedrals it would stand out as a period of consummate artistry and of almost unbelievable expenditure of effort and resources. Due to the ravages of time and man, and especially of fire and tempest, few of the Norman cathedrals remain intact, but Norman work survives in almost all the cathedrals of the old foundation. Chichester Cathedral is most typical of Norman workmanship in the south country; Durham Cathedral in the north.

Chichester Cathedral was built almost in its entirety between 1090 and 1120, and was actually open for divine service ten years before it was completed. Like so many other buildings of the Middle Ages, it was devastated by a great fire only a few years after its consecration, but was immediately rebuilt, only to be damaged once again by fire in 1186. However, so much of the Norman work survived these two fires that it may be said to be predominantly a Norman building, in spite of the Transitional character of much of it, and the later work which includes the thirteenth-century lady chapel and the fourteenth-century spire (which was destroyed and rebuilt in facsimile late in the nineteenth century by Sir George Gilbert Scott). The bell tower set apart from the main fabric of the cathedral is a fifteenth-century structure, and is the only detached bell tower among the English cathedrals, though this feature is not uncommon in parish churches.

Many minor alterations have been made to the cathedral during

the 800 years of its existence, but if one enters by the west door and looks down the nave towards the east end, one has the clearest impression of a great Norman church, simple in design, effective in treatment, wholly satisfactory in its majestic glory.

The style in which this and other Norman cathedrals were built is called Romanesque because, like the Anglo-Saxon style of previous centuries, it was derived directly from the models of ancient Rome. Its most characteristic feature is the semi-circular arch, its most effective decoration the sub-division of the arch form into minor arches, with only the simplest moulding to relieve the austerity of the columns. Yet this very simplicity is in perfect accord with the ideal of a House of God. Many cities regard the Romanesque style of the Norman master masons as the finest style for church building which has ever been elaborated in England.

Durham reflects the greater severity of the north country. Here the columns of the nave, some circular, some square, are massive piers which only qualify for the name of column because they have the traditional capital and base. Even though the Norman architects made some concessions to the need for unobtrusive decoration, the over-all picture is one of massive dignity in which the proportions of every feature of the great church are in perfect harmony, and there is the same attractive effect gained by the repetition of the semi-circular arch form and its sub-division as there is at Chichester.

Though the cathedrals of Chichester and Durham have been picked out as representative of the finest Norman work, perhaps the single great church in England which has changed its character least in the course of nearly 900 years is St. Albans Abbey. It was rebuilt during the Norman period as the church of a Benedictine abbey and only recently has been elevated to the status of cathedral. Here are all the features common to other great Norman churches and also an impression of vast length which must have been present in many of the Norman cathedrals when they were first built, though later additions have obscured it.

Almost all the medieval cathedrals retain a greater or lesser amount of Norman work. Winchester Cathedral, for instance, built either on the site of, or close to that of, an Anglo-Saxon church,

was founded within fifteen years of the Norman occupation, and its choir was completed before the end of the eleventh century. But Winchester is far more a treasure house of all the styles of English architecture, Gothic and Romanesque, than a strictly Norman building. However, it does reproduce faithfully, almost as faithfully as St. Albans Abbey, the Norman conception of a rectangular hall of great length. It is actually more than 550 feet long, and is usually referred to as the longest Gothic church in Europe. Even so, the ground plan, as it were, is largely Norman, as witness the columns of the nave, which were left intact when the church was converted to the Gothic style. Similarly the transepts are substantially in the form in which they were built under the aegis of the first Norman Bishop Walkelin, though they were extensively repaired (but still in the Norman style) early in the twelfth century after they had been damaged by the fall of the Norman tower.

Lincoln in the north country is the complement of Winchester in the south. This cathedral too is exceptionally long, just over 480 feet from its most easterly to its most westerly point. It became an episcopal see seven years after the conquest and the Norman Remigius was the first bishop. An immediate start was made on building a church worthy of its important position, but Lincoln differs from Winchester in that although the ground plan was retained when it was rebuilt in the later Middle Ages, very little of the original Norman work has survived.

This was due partly to an earthquake which occurred in 1185 when Hugh of Avalon, better known as St. Hugh of Lincoln, was bishop. Little is known of the earthquake but it must have been a considerable earth tremor, possibly arising from the subsidence of quarry workings, because the records indicate that the cathedral was virtually destroyed. The roof fell in, parts of the walls fell, and it required all the enthusiasm of St. Hugh and all the resources of the diocese to restore the church to something akin to its former glory.

By the time of St. Hugh the Romanesque style was being supplanted by the Early English style of Gothic. The result is that Lincoln Cathedral is far more a Gothic church than a Norman one. Only parts of the west front, of the nave, and the lower stages

of the west towers survived to give some idea of the style in which the first cathedral on this site was built.

Norwich is the true capital of East Anglia, far more important in history and social life than its position as a county town would suggest. It has retained its status for nearly a thousand years and at one time rivalled London itself in its prosperity and in the number and artistic excellence of its churches. It is not surprising, therefore, that the cathedral should be an exceptionally handsome one. Its chief interest in this context is that it has preserved its Norman form better than most sacred buildings.

Norwich Cathedral was not begun until thirty years after the 'conquest'. That was because the see of East Anglia traditionally belonged to Dunwich and was not transferred until 1094—not directly from Dunwich but after a period of interregnum at Thetford. Once the see was transferred work on building a cathedral began within two years. It is a remarkable tribute to the determination of the Anglo-Norman builders that the choir and transepts were completed by the end of the century, while the nave was finished in the course of the next twenty-five years.

What a different story this is from that of the building of modern cathedrals—of Liverpool, for instance, which has taken more than fifty years to complete. If it had not been that the spire fell in the latter part of the fourteenth century and did a great deal of damage to the fabric (how many great churches in Britain have not suffered a disaster of this kind?) the church of today might well have been wholly Norman. As it is, the 250-foot-long nave is Norman in concept and largely Norman in materials, only the vaulted roof having been added in the fifteenth century, and new windows cut into the walls about the same time.

The choir, too, is Norman in conception and the whole of the ground plan today is almost exactly as it was designed by the Norman architects. Even so, the choir does not give the impression of Romanesque workmanship to anything like the same extent as the nave. The roof and the main arcade are late Gothic. The clerestory is also Gothic but rather earlier than the main arcade. The remarkable thing is how well the different styles blend with each other and how magnificently the later builders accepted

the challenge to reconstruct in a different style and achieved their object without disharmony.

All that has been said so far implies that the Romanesque style of the Norman master masons and architects was an austere one. So in fact it was by comparison either with the Byzantine of eastern Europe or with the interpretation of the Gothic style which followed it in England. Yet as time went on Norman masons became more and more concerned with the problem of embellishing churches by means of elaborate carving. Indeed, if one had to judge Norman architecture by reference to Ely Cathedral alone one would gain an entirely false impression of the style and manner of Norman architects.

Ely Cathedral has many claims to be named as one of the most interesting parts of the medieval heritage. Its position on a low hill rising above the dead level of the Fens makes it conspicuous for many miles around from whichever direction it is approached. When it was constructed the Isle of Ely was an island in fact as well as in name, the Fens around it a still-impenetrable morass traversed by only one or two tracks leading to the monastery and cathedral of Ely. There was a monastic house here from the seventh century, an abbey which ultimately came under the Benedictine rule and in 1083 was reorganized under the first Norman abbot, Simeon. It did not become an episcopal see until 1109 but the abbey church, which before had been in a ruinous condition, was being reconstructed within a year or two of the beginning of Simeon's rule.

However, the greater part of the building is later. The west tower, with its castellations, was doubtless built with an eye to defence and the whole cathedral, like that of Durham, was constructed massively with the thought that it might act as a final defence post in the event of enemy attack. The nave was completed about 1180. Many additions were made after that, especially after the fall of the central tower in 1322, which gave the opportunity to rebuild much of the church in the Decorated style of Gothic.

In all the Norman work of Ely there is a greater tendency than in the earlier churches to use decorative motifs, but the most significant and at the same time the most beautiful part of it is the Prior's Doorway, with intricate but uncommonly tasteful carving

of the tympanum, the supreme example of the last phase of Romanesque art in England.

Ely Cathedral is more than 500 feet long and more than 175 feet broad at the transepts. It is thus one of the largest as well as one of the most attractive of English cathedrals. The twelve Norman bays of the nave are unexcelled, while the dome above the central octagon is a unique feature and has been described as the only Gothic dome in the world. Here again, as in so many other great churches, the contrast between the Romanesque and the Gothic styles is never obtrusive and the way in which successive re-buildings have been carried out in different styles without any apparent aesthetic loss evokes nothing but admiration. But Ely, like Chichester and Durham, is pre-eminently a Norman building.

Peterborough Cathedral is another example of the elaboration of which late-Norman architects were capable. This tendency is best seen in the west front, which takes its character from its recessed arches, a simple but most effective form of decoration. Even so, one can easily be misled by Peterborough Cathedral. The west front is a Norman conception, but the statues which form such an important part of it today are a later addition and date from the Early English period of Gothic architecture in the thirteenth century. Its greatest interest lies in the fact that the impression given by the nave is one of relative lightness, in contrast with the massive architecture of Durham or Chichester.

Like several other Norman churches described in this chapter, it was originally the church of a Benedictine monastery, founded towards the end of the tenth century. The oldest part of the church is the choir, which was completed in 1150. However, the whole church is Norman in character and the nave was designed and built before the end of the twelfth century. Most of the windows are later and are mainly in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture current in the fourteenth century. Similarly the central tower dates from the fourteenth century. Almost the whole of the cathedral, including the west front, was restored in the nineteenth century, though its character was not altered greatly.

Finally, Rochester Cathedral, although one of the lesser of the great churches of Norman times, represents most admirably the Romanesque style of building. In spite of its relatively small size and

the fact that it is overshadowed in Kent by Canterbury Cathedral, it is nevertheless one of the finest examples of Norman architecture in England. It reflects the style of Canterbury on a smaller scale, appropriately since, like Canterbury, it was one of the foundations of St. Augustine in the seventh century, when it is probable that a church was built from the bricks and rubble of the Romano-British town of Rochester. Some evidence indeed was found of an early Anglo-Saxon church during a nineteenth-century restoration.

In 1066 the Saxon church was in ruins. When a Norman bishop was appointed to the see he inspired a rebuilding which was completed before the end of the eleventh century. The present south side of the nave was part of this early-Norman church, as was the crypt. Before the middle of the twelfth century rebuilding was in progress again for no other reason, it seems, than that the original church did not satisfy the aesthetic requirements of later bishops. Much more survives of this second Norman church than of the first, including most of the nave and the west front with its magnificent recessed doorway, one of the finest of the examples in Britain of the decorative effect produced by recessed orders of columns.

In spite of this, Rochester does not present as forcibly as most of the other cathedrals of the old foundation the appearance of a Norman church. It was almost completely rebuilt at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the Early English style of Gothic was well established. Most of the choir and the north transept, as well as the presbytery, is in this early style of Gothic, while the south transept and part of the nave were not built until the Decorated style of Gothic had taken the place of the Early English. The magnificent window at the west end of the nave is a still later addition —of the fifteenth century—while the tower and spire were rebuilt in the nineteenth century, in imitation of their medieval counterparts. Whereas the towers of most medieval cathedrals fell and in their fall destroyed much of the original fabric of the church, the tower of Rochester, constructed in the fourteenth century, was rebuilt when it was in danger of collapse, while the present tower, mean though it may appear, was built in imitation of the medieval one by reference to plans and drawings of the cathedral as it was.

Towards the end of the twelfth century the Romanesque style

of building had outrun itself. By then there was a general feeling in favour of a change, if only because change was desired for its own sake. Every building style is in one sense transitional, because the art and practice of building is never static. But the change from the Romanesque to the Gothic went much farther than this. The Gothic style was something entirely new, a revolution in design as well as in style. Hitherto the semi-circular arch of the Romanesque style had determined the whole spirit of churches and other great buildings. The Gothic style when it became established freed architects from the conventions which had been made necessary by the Romanesque. No longer was the height determined by the semi-circular arch.

So the Transitional stage of the last decades of the twelfth century was a period in English building distinguished from all others by the vast importance of the changes which it heralded. Canterbury Cathedral of all the greater churches shows this transition most vividly. As it happens we know the names of the master masons who were responsible. William of Sens was the architect of the later Norman phase, William the Englishman of the Transitional. It is rarely that the names of medieval architects are known, if only because, out of courtesy or convention, the building or rebuilding of a church was always ascribed to the bishop, or in the case of monastic churches to the abbot or prior. However, at Canterbury the work of each of these great master craftsmen can be distinguished.

When the genius of medieval church builders and their contribution to architecture are being assessed, one must bear in mind that the now plain walls were decorated with gaily-coloured paintings. During the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century these paintings were covered with whitewash and only a few have been recovered. They must have made an enormous difference to the appearance of the nave and chancel of churches, great and small—a factor which is too often forgotten in view of the present-day austerity of the monochrome walls of nave and choir.

At the beginning of the Norman period the Cathedral of Christchurch (Canterbury) was in a state of decay. It had been badly damaged during the Danish invasion at the beginning of the

eleventh century. Although King Canute made amends by providing funds for its rebuilding, it was in ruins when the Norman Archbishop Lanfranc was appointed to the see in 1070. Lanfranc undertook the responsibility of rebuilding but it was not ready to be used for public worship until 1130 and then chiefly due to the efforts of Prior Conrad, who had control of the priory between 1110 and 1126

Disaster overtook this Norman cathedral, as so many others. It was devastated by fire in 1174, so that an almost completely new cathedral had to be built. William of Sens was given the task of redesigning the choir, which had been totally destroyed, but before he had completed the work he died and his work was carried on by William the Englishman between 1178 and 1180. Obviously both Williams were influenced by Gothic ideas and yet clung to the Romanesque ideals of previous centuries. So Canterbury Cathedral represents the most important of all transitional phases in the history of English architecture. Though part of it, including the Angel Steeple, more recently known as the Bell Harry Tower, derives from a late period of Gothic architecture, most of it is in the Romanesque or Transitional style and shows to the full the incomparable beauty of which this style was capable and the architectural skill which both Norman and Englishman had at their command.

The rebuilding of the English parish churches, as has been stated before, had to wait until some of the major Norman commitments in terms of cathedrals, abbeys, priories, and castles were discharged. It was partly a matter of making the best possible use of the available labour force, partly of finance, in so far that there was a limit even to the combined resources of Normandy and England, and partly of a lack of materials, which had to be quarried and transported with much greater expenditure of effort than would be the case today.

It is one of the wonders of the Norman world that so much building stone was obtained, dressed, and made ready for use, when one considers the great thickness of the walls of the castles and equally of the cathedrals—a thickness which was absolutely essential if the buildings were to stand, in view of the absence of buttresses which took the strain from the walls of Gothic cathe-

drals and major churches but had not been invented in Norman times. Most of the stone used was quarried locally but there are many districts in England where local stone is not available, and it was sometimes found more economical to import stone from Normandy. This was ferried across the Channel in barges and up the river estuaries of East Anglia and Sussex.

There was also a steady demand for some specially prized stone, such as Purbeck marble. Although this also was generally transported by water as far as possible the effort necessary to carry it from the rivers across the muddy tracks and unmade roads of an area like East Anglia or the Midlands was enormous. It was certainly a major problem but one which the Normans solved, though the method of their solution is not wholly known any more than the solution of the similar problem which was solved by prehistoric man in transporting, for instance, the blue stones of Stonehenge from the Prescelly Hills of Pembrokeshire to the plateau of Wiltshire.

Most Norman parish churches belong to the twelfth century, many of them the the latter half of the twelfth century. A parochial division of England had been laid down by Theodore of Tarsus in the seventh century but most parishes were co-extensive with the lands held by the Anglo-Saxon thanes and later by the Anglo-Norman lords of the manor. The parish priest was in effect a private chaplain of the lord, living either in the manor-house or, later, in a chamber reserved for him in the tower of the parish church. The parish was not entirely divorced from the manor until the thirteenth century and the expense of maintaining the church, and of rebuilding it as necessity demanded, fell upon the lord of the manor. That is an additional reason why so little was done in the parishes during the eleventh century, when the accent so far as the Anglo-Norman landowners were concerned was on defence.

Comparatively few Norman parish churches have survived intact. Most of them were enlarged, if only by the addition of an aisle which completely changed their character, during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, while a number were redesigned entirely during the woollen boom of the fifteenth century. Yet those few which have been handed down to the present day show the characteristic Norman artistry best represented perhaps by the

cathedrals but equally striking in the case of the lesser churches. They are in effect cathedrals in miniature, showing the same facets of decoration and design as those which make the cathedrals such a significant part of the medieval heritage. There is the same dominance of the semi-circular arch, the same decorative effect achieved by the sub-division of the arch form, the same simple moulding and sculptural devices, the same attractive and often impressive effect achieved by recessed orders of columns, especially in the porch.

From the several hundred churches which are predominantly Norman in character it is difficult to pick out a few which best express the aims and achievements of their architects. Kilpeck in Herefordshire, Iffley near Oxford, and Old Shoreham in Sussex are, however, three which could not possibly be omitted from any list of outstanding Norman parish churches. The rebuilding of Kilpeck was begun between 1120 and 1130 but the first Norman church was quickly superseded and the greater part of the present-day fabric dates from about 1175. It shows very clearly the greater amount of ornamentation which became popular during the latter part of the twelfth century but no part of it is in anything but the best of taste and the impression it gives is of a perfect hall for prayer and meditation for a small congregation.

Iffley church by the banks of the Thames or Isis, the parish church of a village which has become virtually a suburb of Oxford (though at the time when it was built the two communities were entirely separate), dates, like Kilpeck, from the second half of the twelfth century. Although it was partially rebuilt 100 years later, when the Early English style was current, the tower, almost all the west front, and the south doorway are typical of the very finest late-Norman workmanship, while the nave retains very strongly the atmosphere which it must have had when it was first built.

Old Shoreham in Sussex, the church which served the community which lived around one of the smaller but vitally important ports in southern England, is rather earlier than either Kilpeck or Iffley. It is of particular interest because the whole of the church except the chancel has changed little since it was constructed. The reason for this was that the port was transferred to New Shoreham and the need for major enlargement of Old Shoreham church did

not arise. The church of New Shoreham, too, is essentially a Norman one, though it is but a shadow of its former self. It was begun early in the twelfth century and retains its Norman transepts and tower, while the chancel, though belonging to the Transitional period of the end of the twelfth century, is predominantly Norman also. Unhappily the nave was destroyed and has not been rebuilt.

To these must be added Barfreston in Kent, a small church even by the standards of early parish churches, but a peculiarly beautiful one, the equal in the style of its carving and its proportions to any of the greater churches of the period. The carving of the south doorway is immaculate and wonderfully preserved considering that it is more than 750 years old, while the wheel window looks forward to the more elaborate style of Gothic decoration. So Barfreston is Transitional not so much in point of architectural style as in spirit between the mature Norman and the early Gothic.

In every phase of life, but especially in architecture and art, the emergence of the Gothic world was a great landmark in history, and nowhere more so than in Britain. The Gothic period, that is to say the period between the decline of the Romanesque ideals derived from the classical world of tradition and the decay of medieval life and thought, lasted from the latter decades of the twelfth century until the Renaissance of knowledge which represented a return in the sixteenth century to classical ideals transmitted through the developing culture of European countries. The Renaissance reached England only a short time before the Reformation in religion brought about by Henry VIII.

Thus the Gothic world comprehends the whole of the latter part of the medieval heritage. It was a period of rapid advance in art as in science, a period in which education ceased to be the prerogative of the few, a period in which the accent was still on building 'to the greater glory of God', but in which the status of the common man improved from that of a mere serf to that of a self-respecting hired labourer. It was, in other words, the period above all others which may be called a transitional one in British history. It saw the breakdown of the feudal system and the development of prosperous towns and villages independent, or virtually independent, of the authority either of the secular lords of the manors or of the abbots and priors who were among the greatest

land-holders in the country. Incidentally, it witnessed the break-away of parish authority from that of the lord of the manor, while the middle class of merchants and tenant farmers began to take an increasing part in the life of the country and in the conduct of parish affairs.

Throughout the whole of this period, from the first brilliant improvisations of Gothic architects about 1190 until the accession of Henry VII in 1485, architecture remained the supreme art, while the other arts—sculpture, wood-carving, painting on glass and on walls—were the handmaidens of architecture. Perhaps because England had a long tradition dating from Anglo-Saxon times of special ability in woodwork, the supreme artistry of the Gothic world of England is represented by wood-carving, whether in the carving of bench ends or chancel screens, or timber roofs. It is significant that the royal carpenter had a status of almost equal importance to that of the royal mason.

A question often asked but seldom answered precisely is: 'What exactly did the Gothic revolution mean in terms of church building?' We have already seen that it released medieval architects from the formality of the semi-circular arch, and gave them the greater freedom of the pointed arch, which made the height of a building, whether a house or church, independent of its width. But that is only a minor facet of the revolution which the Gothic style implied. Much more important was the fact that Gothic builders no longer depended on the massiveness of the piers and walls of a church to sustain the stresses of the roof. This is well expressed by the statement that whereas Romanesque architecture was based on equilibrium, Gothic architecture was dynamic. The stresses of the roof were transferred to buttresses, some of them flush with the walls, others, known as flying buttresses, standing clear of the building and forming an integral part of its composition. This factor in turn meant that the columns of the nave, for instance, could be far more slender, far more elegant, while the walls could be less massive and, above all, could be pierced with larger windows so as to give more light to the interior and a greater variety of design. The result was a greater sense of spaciousness and of light in the interior of a church.

To those who had been brought up in a classical tradition, and

Three Phases of Norman Workmanship. The Church of St. Mary Magdalene (*left*) is one of the five medieval round churches still recognizable. It was originally the Norman chapel of Ludlow Castle. Stewkley Church, Buckinghamshire (*below left*) is exceptional because of its fine square Norman tower with excellent arcading, and the artistry of its round-headed Norman windows. Though the parish church of East Meon (*below right*) is of very mixed style, the Norman origin of the tower is unmistakable
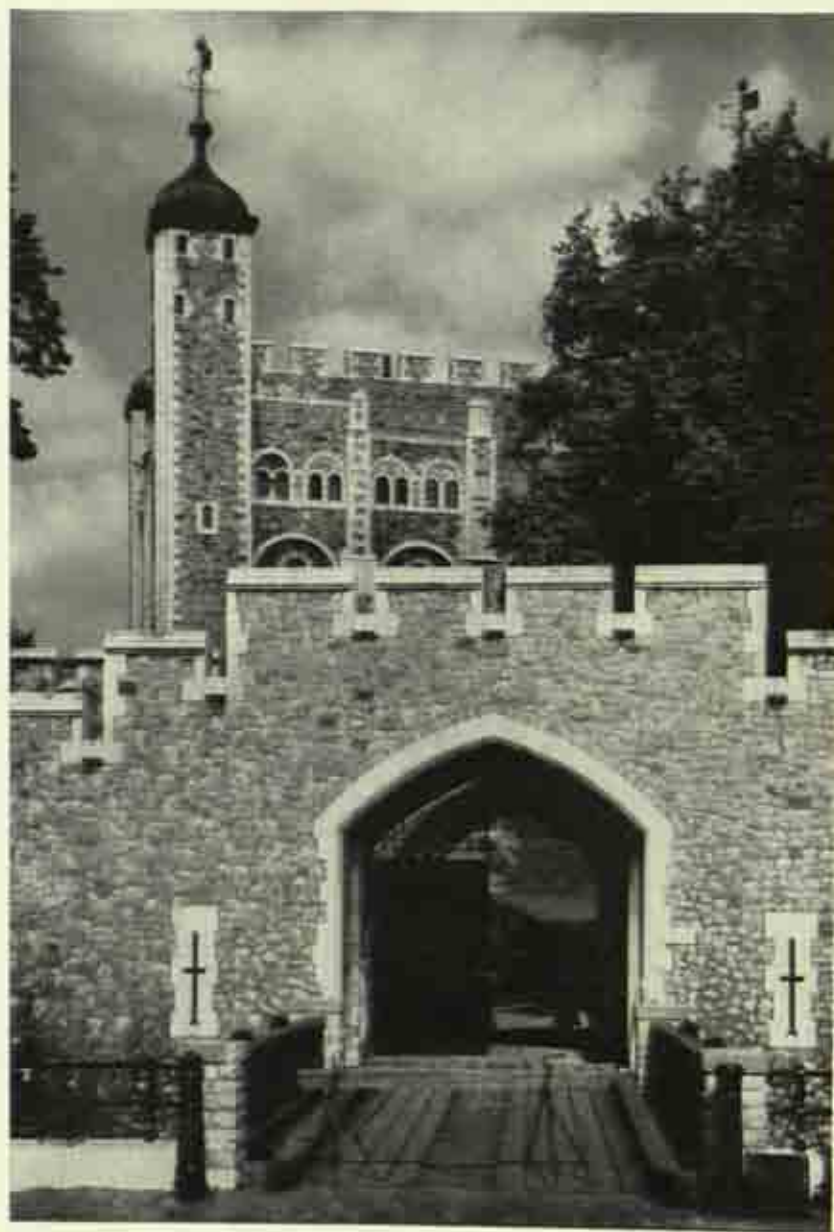
The Tower of London. Here the Norman architecture of the White Tower, the original fortress of the castle of London, is clearly seen behind the later wall on the river front added when the Norman castle was being converted into one of concentric type

more especially to the leaders of the Renaissance movement, the Gothic style represented something barbarous. There is a well-founded story that the very term 'Gothic' was invented by Sir Christopher Wren, the great apostle of the return to classical forms in the seventeenth century, who regarded the pointed arch and everything which went with it as barbarous innovations and compared them with the destruction of the Roman Empire by the Goths and Visigoths. However, it could not be denied even by a Christopher Wren that the introduction of this completely new concept of building heralded by the Transitional style of Canterbury Cathedral represented an extraordinary advance in building technique. Towers and spires might still fall and destroy the fabric of churches, either because they were struck by lightning or through faulty construction, but the basis of building was far more scientific and the results were far more varied and spectacular.

The Gothic period in church and other building is divided, solely for the sake of convenience, into three main sections. Victorian writers called these First Pointed, Second Pointed and Third Pointed, because a feature of each style is the pointed arch. During the present century the divisions corresponding with these have been called Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular, a much more appropriate nomenclature in so far as the pointed arch is only one facet of the Gothic style.

The Early English style, the purest as well as the first of the three, lasted from the beginning of the period towards the end of the twelfth century until the latter part of the thirteenth. It was marked by lancet windows, narrow pointed lights often grouped in threes or fives. The Decorated style which succeeded it was distinguished by the gathering together of these separate lights under a pointed arch, the space between the heads of the lights and the top of the arch being filled with tracery or stone carving of a more or less elaborate type. This tracery, which explains perfectly the name Decorated, varied from simple geometrical forms to imaginative conceptions of great complexity. The third stage, the Perpendicular, which began in the fourteenth century and persisted until Tudor times, was a reaction against the licence of the Decorated. It was typified, as its name suggests, by perpendicular lines not only in the windows but in every facet of the church,

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lines which carried the eye from ground to roof without a break. It was a style in which decoration for its own sake was frowned upon and in which design was of supreme importance.

The first phase of Gothic building, that is of the Early English style, is best represented by the incomparable Salisbury Cathedral, which is the only English cathedral built wholly within this period. An earlier cathedral had been built at Old Sarum, the site of on Anglo-Saxon town which was adopted by the Normans and retained by them as a cathedral city. Norman master-masons were called in to rebuild the church of Old Sarum and in 1075 it supplanted Sherborne as the ecclesiastical centre of south central England.

The Normans not only redesigned the Saxon church but protected the town with earthworks of which traces remain to the present day. A castle was built for the use of the bishop, not only as a residence but as a fortress against possible attack, as at Durham, but towards the middle of the twelfth century there were disputes between the bishop and the King, and the bishop's palace ultimately became a royal castle. Still later, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, it was decided to remove the episcopal see to a more favourable position.

Opinions differ on the reasons for this decision. Some favour the view that Old Sarum, because it was a natural defensive site, was required by the military authorities to be without ecclesiastical encumbrance; others suggest that the real reason was shortage of fresh water for the growing population and the impossibility of extending the old town beyond the limits of the Norman earthworks. Which of these two, or of several other less-probable reasons, was the real one can never be determined. The fact remains that in 1220 the Bishop of Old Sarum, with the authority of the King, gave orders for the transference of the see from this traditional site to one in the valley at the confluence of the River Avon and one of its tributaries.

So New Sarum, known to us today as Salisbury, was born and by a miracle of medieval effort the great cathedral, which still dominates not only Salisbury but the countryside for miles around, was virtually completed within the span of forty years—from 1220 to 1260. Part of the tower, and the spire, were added later—early

in the fourteenth century—the spire, exceeding 400 feet in height, being the tallest of any church spire in England; but though repair of the fabric, especially of the spire, which has always threatened to collapse, has been in progress at intervals ever since then, no major alteration has been made to the main part of the fabric.

Salisbury Cathedral stands today as an architectural conception without parallel in England, or indeed in any part of Europe. It allows the excellence of the early-Gothic style to be judged in relation not only to the buildings of the same period but to those which preceded it and those which have been constructed in later centuries. It is said that Salisbury Cathedral is wholly English in design. That is not quite certain, though it is highly likely. The influence of Norman architects almost certainly declined before the Romanesque style went out of fashion and it is certain that in the later developments of Gothic architecture English master masons and designers were responsible for the vast majority of churches and other buildings. The Early English style represented by Salisbury Cathedral is in this sense transitional but it most probably represents an English translation of an idiom which had originated in Italy nearly 100 years before. From this time onwards at least English architects became in the imaginative quality of their designs and in the technical skill of their building plans the equal of any on the Continent, even though the traditions which they inherited were derived indirectly from the Anglo-Norman masters.

Much of the stone for the building of the cathedral of New Sarum was carted from Old Sarum. An interesting sidelight on this fact is afforded by the unexpected appearance of Romanesque, that is Norman, decorative panels in the stonework of the wall enclosing the cathedral close, best seen where it adjoins the main road leading out of Salisbury to the south. Such re-use of materials in an age in which transport still presented major difficulties was the general rule throughout the great period of medieval building.

Salisbury, then, is the perfect example of the Early English style, even though some critics think the appearance of the interior is rather bare. A slight austerity is inherent in this phase of Gothic building, and it is as appropriate to say in this context *nil*

disputandum de gustibus (there can be no argument about tastes) as in any other. One feature which is certainly not austere is the west front, which was designed as a kind of backcloth for numerous statues recessed in niches. Most of the original statues were destroyed when the iconoclastic wrath of the Puritans fell upon them in the Commonwealth period and the majority of those standing today are nineteenth-century imitations of the originals.

There is no other Salisbury, but there are several other great churches which illustrate the harmony and beauty of the Early English style. In particular, the cathedral of Wells in Somerset reveals the superb artistry of which English carvers in stone were becoming capable. It is believed that there was a school of stone carvers centred in Wells because stone-carving, though on a lesser scale, can be found in many other west-country churches.

Wells Cathedral represents the very first phase of Gothic craftsmanship. It was being built at the same time as William the Englishman was completing the transformation of Canterbury Cathedral in the Transitional style. Yet although parts of the cathedral are obviously Transitional in character, the bulk of it is pure Gothic, especially the nave and the west front. The whole building was finished and consecrated before 1240 and only minor alterations in the Decorated style have been made since then.

The first impression it gives a visitor entering by the west door is of the superb proportions of the nave and the lightness of the columns, in contrast with the massiveness of Romanesque ones. This lightness of touch is enhanced by the fact that the nave is almost free from the monuments which in most cathedrals occupy the greater part of the area beside the walls. A closer, more intimate, inspection reveals the great glory of Wells, the elaborate carving on the capitals of the columns. This, then, is the contribution of the Wells school of craftsmen to the adornment of sacred buildings. And remarkably successful it is, with its complex foliation and the series of beautifully executed carvings of animals and birds.

The west front in its own way is just as impressive as the carving of the nave capitals. It may be criticized because it overlaps the width of the nave, but that is a purist criticism and quite irrelevant to the aesthetic pleasure which this creation of thirteenth-century

stone-masons gives. To an even greater extent than the west front of Salisbury it is a backcloth for statues, almost 150 feet wide and rising to the full height of the church, with niches for no less than 350 figures arranged in eight tiers. This unparalleled collection of statuary escaped the fate of the similar but smaller collection at Salisbury. Almost all the figures which at present decorate the front are contemporary with the building of the church and the work of the same master craftsmen who carried out the carving of the capitals of the nave columns. Without any doubt this is the most remarkable group of medieval statuary in the whole of Europe and probably in the world. The centre theme is the coronation of the Virgin Mary. Around it the subjects range from representations of the apostles and other characters from the New Testament and the Old, together with the figures of English bishops and kings, numerous angels, and an impressive rendering of the resurrection of the dead.

Westminster Abbey, or, to give it the name by which it is officially known, the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, is another of the finest early-Gothic churches in the country. On the completion of King Edward's abbey in 1066 it was regarded as one of the most handsome of all Anglo-Saxon-Norman buildings. In truth it was a Norman building, in so far as its architects and master masons were all imported from Normandy. It was Anglo-Saxon only in the sense that it was completed when the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings was on the throne.

Little of this early church or of the conventual buildings attached to it has survived, largely because Henry III, one of the most pious of all English kings, decided to rebuild the entire church and the monastery in honour of the now canonized St. Edward, whose tomb is the centre-piece of the whole church. The tomb or shrine is itself a remarkable piece of early-Gothic workmanship. It was built on behalf of Henry apparently by the master craftsman Peter of Rome, and was completed about 1260. Unhappily the shrine was damaged during the Puritan revolution and the original work is obscured by the sixteenth-century wooden upper part. But it is not difficult to recapture in the imagination the beauty of the shrine as it was when it was decorated with the golden images of saints and with many precious stones,

all of which were removed at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries.

As regards the fabric of the church, the most dominant feature today is the magnificent Tudor chapel at the east end, the chapel built during the reign of Henry VII and bearing that king's name. But the splendid fan tracery on this very late-Gothic chapel ought not to dim the brilliance of the thirteenth-century workmanship of the nave and the transepts, nor the imaginative use of buttresses on the exterior, adding, as so often, to the attractiveness of the fabric as well as giving it stability.

The transepts and part of the nave were constructed between 1245 and 1300, as well as the eastern part of the church in which the shrine of St. Edward is situated. The western part of the nave was reconstructed between 1350 and 1420, but the reconstruction followed in general the thirteenth-century design, and betrays its later origin only in a number of minor details. The church as a whole, especially as viewed from its western end, typifies the supreme artistry and the skilful design of thirteenth-century church builders, and in particular the builders who found such vivid inspiration at a time when the Early English style was declining and the simple geometrical features of the Decorated period were beginning to find favour.

It is all too easy to think of the historic heritage in terms of great feats of architecture, in terms say of Salisbury or Wells Cathedral as seen from a distance. In fact the finest parts of the heritage are often in the details, in stone-carving, and towards the end of the Middle Ages in wood-carving. The carved capitals and the medieval statues of Wells form a perfect introduction to this phase of the heritage.

In the sphere of the parish church too the Early English or lancet period of building is well represented, though extraordinarily few of the smaller churches can be said, like Salisbury Cathedral, to express wholly the spirit of this age. Generally one can note only a group of three or five lancets at the east end of the church, or observe the Early English style in the columns of the nave. In almost all cases aisles were added later and tended to destroy the Early English character of the church as a whole. However, the churches of West Walton in Norfolk and Cherry

Hinton in Cambridgeshire still strike the authentic note of the early part of the thirteenth century, while at West Walton the carved capitals of the nave columns have a quality almost as arresting as those of Wells.

The search for beautiful details in England's medieval churches is a life-long study and a hobby which is surpassed by no other in its interest and in the satisfaction it gives. Moreover it is a hobby which anyone can pursue in his own locality, for there is no single area of England in which there is not a number of medieval churches. Though some are small and rather mean, reflecting the comparative poverty of the area during the great era of church building, there are few, if any, which do not have some hidden beauty to reveal, some facet of interest not apparent from a cursory glance at the exterior, while many of them, probably the majority, reveal the contrasting styles of at least three periods of building, that is to say, three out of the six most easily distinguished styles, the Saxon, the Norman, the Early English, the Decorated, the Perpendicular and the Tudor.

Even fewer great churches are predominantly in the Decorated style than are in the Early English. Exeter Cathedral is one of the finest. It is of Norman origin but was being rebuilt between 1250 and 1300, the time at which this style was at its height in Britain and before it had degenerated into a style rather akin to the tasteless Flamboyant of France. The rebuilding was not completed until 1350 and the west front is the latest feature of this great church, but the plan of the whole was at least approved well before the end of the thirteenth century and subsequent alterations to the plan were slight. Perhaps the most significant feature of the interior is its symmetry. Certainly the most arresting feature of the exterior is the number of buttresses which, although utilitarian in purpose, add enormously to the architectural and aesthetic interest of the building. But the supreme artistry of the stone-carving represented by the tracery of the windows most strongly captures the imagination and makes a visit to Exeter Cathedral one of the most memorable of all historic pilgrimages.

It was perhaps the danger that the Decorated style in its later stages, when tracery was not confined to simple geometrical patterns but included highly imaginative concepts, might

degenerate into a true Flamboyant style so foreign to the ideals and aspirations of Englishmen that caused it to be superseded before it was too late by a style which we know as Perpendicular. The Perpendicular style was wholly English in origin and has no counterpart on the Continent. It represented a return to the austerity of Norman churches and made no concession to the growing luxury of the age.

The story of the building of churches in this, the last phase of Gothic architecture, and of the rebuilding of many hundreds of others, belongs rather to the story of England in the centuries immediately preceding the Renaissance and the Reformation, described more fully in Chapter 8. All that we need say at this point is that the style represented a natural development from the earlier phases of the medieval heritage. It did not stand apart as an omen of a new world—rather it flowed inevitably from the earlier stages of Gothic architecture as interpreted by Englishmen.

The Norman Castle

CASTLES, even though the majority are lying in more or less fragmentary ruins, comprise one of the most spectacular part of the medieval heritage. In very many cases the masonry of the original castle has disappeared and only the earthworks are left. If we include these earthworks in the list, and also the lesser fortresses or peels of Northumberland and the countryside bordering on Scotland, there are more than a thousand known sites and at least one within easy reach of any town or village in England and Wales.

The great period of castle building began with the accession of William I and lasted for about a century. After that there was a pause while many hastily erected castles were demolished. Then came another era of castle building, especially in Wales, where mighty fortresses incorporating revolutionary principles of design were erected to secure the Edwardian conquests.

After that castle building was only spasmodic, though there was no period when building ceased entirely. However, it became more and more specialized and virtually ended with the building of a chain of fortresses designed to protect the south coast from overseas attack during the reign of Henry VIII.

The death knell of castles was sounded as conclusively by the end of the Civil War as it was in the case of the abbeys by the Reformation. Oliver Cromwell gave orders that all existing castles, with very few and special exceptions, should be slighted, which meant that their battlements were destroyed and their roofs dismantled. He recognized that the existence of some hundreds of defensible castles mostly in Royalist hands had prolonged the course of the war by years. He was determined that never again should a castle stand between the people and the consummation of their will. One of the greatest of all tributes to the immense passive strength of medieval castles is that they played such an important part in the Civil War hundreds of years after their heyday, and at a

time when gunpowder might have been expected to render castles of masonry obsolete. A still more striking tribute is that several of the still-surviving ruins received direct hits from high-explosive or incendiary bombs during the aerial bombardments of the Second World War and stood the test of this modern form of warfare at least as well as any of the modern buildings surrounding them. It is significant that when the scars of war were cleared away from Norwich and Southampton, the medieval walls were left standing, while the majority of the houses built against them were utterly destroyed.

Many of the castles of which ruins survive today have been uninhabited since the end of the Civil War. In towns they have been used as stone quarries for building or for paving the roads. In the countryside they have mouldered away through sheer neglect. But a few when their battlements were taken down continued to serve as private residences and have become the nuclei of some of the royal and palatial homes of today. Windsor and Warwick are two in this category which spring to mind, though there are a number less well known in which a private house was built into the fabric of an earlier castle or constructed from its ready supply of stone and rubble.

The Norman castle is in a class by itself, because it gives an important clue to the Norman way of life, and represents an epoch-making development in the story of England, social as well as military. It is the symbol, as it were, of the transition from an Anglo-Saxon society to an Anglo-Norman one. To what extent, if any, the English built castles before the time of the Norman occupation is still disputed. But it is fairly certain that no castles of masonry were erected before that time. It is claimed that the gaunt ruins of Corfe castle show traces of Saxon workmanship. If that claim is admitted, then Corfe must be the exception to the general rule, since there is little if any evidence of Saxon building in any other medieval castle.

The Viking rulers of eastern England after the partition of the Treaty of Wedmore, signed between King Alfred and the Danish King Guthrum, introduced the concept of towns and of strong-points to defend them. In a sense, therefore, the Danish strong-holds of Stamford and other boroughs were the forerunners of the

later medieval castle, but these strong-points were probably no more than earthen defences capped by timber palisades.

The same is true of the numerous Saxon burhs which were the lineal descendants of the Danish fortresses and were thrown up in increasing numbers at strategic points during the first half of the eleventh century. In fact during the reign of Edward the Confessor many Normans were granted land in England by the King, very much against the will of the Saxon earls. These Normans were in the main friends of the King, who had known them during his childhood and young manhood when he was living as an exile in Normandy with his mother Emma. So this 'peaceful' invasion of England by Norman families was a perfectly natural development and because by then the Normans were well known for their skill in castle building, they may well have introduced into England some phases of the craft, just as they brought with them knowledge of a more developed type of Romanesque architecture than that favoured by the Anglo-Saxons.

It must be remembered that William of Normandy, when he became King of England, was in a position which differed materially from that of any previous sovereign. He is known to posterity primarily as a man who showed enormous skill in warfare and only secondarily as a statesman and a man of peace. Yet pacification was always his aim and he showed abundant evidence of good statesmanship in the way he organized the government of England and integrated the English realm with that of his native Normandy, bringing peace among the Norman barons for the first time for generations. It has well been said that he came to England not as a conqueror but as a crusader, with the full blessing of the Pope. Not only was Harold a usurper in Norman eyes but he showed no sign of following the canonical law in his relations with the Church, since he had procured the appointment of a Saxon to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, Stigand by name, who did not command the confidence of the Pope in Rome. Harold himself was a man of exceptional prowess in battle but he did not have at his command the well-armed band of warriors which through the working of the feudal system was at the disposal of William.

So the result of the 'war' between the Normans and the English

was foregone. But this was in no sense a war between nations; rather its outcome depended on a pitched battle between representatives of one nation and representatives of the other. When that single battle had been fought there was little opposition left to the Norman invaders. The Battle of Hastings, as it is known to history, was fought on the hill of Senlac. It resulted in not only the death of Harold but the dispersal and the utter rout of the tired and depleted Saxon army, and the death of many of the noblemen who had been close to Harold and had supported him with the greatest enthusiasm.

William, in accordance with his position as a crusader, vowed that he would found an abbey on the site of his great victory, and he kept his vow. That abbey became known appropriately as Battle Abbey, of which the main gateway and some other fragments survive in the midst of the more modern buildings which ultimately became a girls' school.

Special mention is made of the foundation of Battle Abbey, because it illustrates so well the dual character of Norman William as a man of God and a man of war, and underlines too the close connexion which existed then and throughout the greater part of the Middle Ages between Church and State. The Church of Rome was a Church Militant. The Church in England, as it was reorganized by William, became equally a Church Militant. Bishops and abbots alike might and did engage in warfare so long as the war was a holy one. It is particularly significant that when William came to parcel out the land of the Anglo-Saxons among the Norman barons and knights many of the tenants-in-chief were churchmen. In appropriate places these churchmen became responsible for the building and upkeep of many of the most powerful of the Norman fortresses in England.

The great problem of the conqueror, or, as he, his followers and the Church of Rome would have it, the rightful heir to the English throne, was to secure the dominion which he had gained as a result of a single battle involving not more than 20,000 men. He also had the problem of pacifying his own supporters, for Normandy, originally a small kingdom of Norse foundation owing general allegiance to the King of France, had been torn by strife for generations before William's accession as Duke. The feudal

system which had been perfected there had many failings, its chief one that the power of individual barons ensconced in their castles might be greater than that of the Duke. In Normandy just as the Duke owed token allegiance to the King of France, and the barons owed allegiance to the Duke, their knights in turn were under obligation to bear arms for the barons from whom they held their land rather than from the Duke.

It was perhaps only the opportunity of a holy war against the English which saved the dukedom of Normandy from being devastated by prolonged internal strife. When the partition of England was carried out William showed that he had learned his lesson, and it was his personal influence which led to an all-important change in feudal tenure, so that before the end of his reign the knights were swearing allegiance to the king rather than to their immediate superiors, the barons. As subsequent events showed, the change was effective only as long as there was a strong sovereign. The interminable but petty civil wars which occurred during the reigns of weak sovereigns such as John and Stephen proved conclusively that feudal tenure, however organized, was no guarantee of internal peace. However, the salient fact was that William was well aware of the problem and set out to find a solution for it.

The change of position of the knights in relation to the barons and the king was one facet of his solution. Another was the granting of the land of the Anglo-Saxons to Norman noblemen, not in compact parcels but in the form of manors scattered over a number of shires. When the partition was complete some Normans had the tenure of manors in a dozen or more of the shires, as well as extensive lands in Normandy. The partition occupied the greater part of the reign but the wisdom of proceeding by slow degrees was justified by the fact that, apart from a dangerous insurrection in the north which took place three years after William's coronation, there was no concerted opposition from any Anglo-Saxon groups and indeed little evidence of any marked civil discord.

The insurrection in the north gave William the opportunity to show by example that he was prepared to govern the English in peace but was equally ready to bring fire and sword into their homes if they would not accept Norman rule. The evidence of the

Domesday Survey is conclusive. Thousands of farmsteads and villages in Northumberland and Durham and parts of Yorkshire were wasted, while other parts of the country were enjoying a boom, in many parts greater than that which they had enjoyed during the reign of Edward the Confessor. The north was impoverished. Homes and mills were burnt to the ground, many of the people were killed mercilessly, and it was generations before the damage was repaired, and then only through the hard work and enthusiasm of the new Norman overlords. If ever there were a military operation which could be called ruthless, the suppression of this insurrection was one.

It has been said that this wholesale murder of mainly defenceless people lay heavily on William's conscience and troubled him even on his deathbed. That may well be so, for no one can doubt that he had ideas of justice and compassion far in advance of his times and did not subscribe, as most of his followers did, and indeed as did most of the civilized peoples of the time, to a cynical disregard of equity. Yet as a matter of practical politics the swift retribution which followed this single expression of Anglo-Saxon nationalism was justified, for it was never repeated. The insurrection did, however, persuade William that it was of little use to try to work through the Anglo-Saxon earls and thanes, or indeed through Anglo-Saxon churchmen. Before the reign was over the Bishop of Worcester was the only Englishman in possession of a see, and there were only two Anglo-Saxon noblemen who had retained estates in their own right. The thanes, one and all, were dispossessed and reduced in status to that of vassals of the Anglo-Norman noblemen, while the lesser Anglo-Saxon farmers became variously villeins or cotters, and many families which had been independent before the Norman occupation were reduced to serfdom.

The building of the castles was a most important concomitant of this complete though mainly bloodless revolution. Whereas the imposition of Norman ways and the dispossession of the Saxon landowners was the direct political result of the occupation, the castles represented, in the first instance at least, the military implications of a small group of alien origin controlling a country with a population of about two million. In the simplest possible

terms the Norman castles were designed to hold open the lines of communications throughout the length and breadth of England and of south and central Wales. At the same time they were intended to secure the large number of towns, some of which dated back to the Norse occupation of eastern England, but the vast majority of which had begun to achieve real importance as market centres during the last century of Anglo-Saxon rule. It is inevitable therefore, that we should find the densest concentration of castles in the areas most liable to external attack, especially in Kent and Sussex, and on the border lands of Celtic Wales and Scotland.

The south-east coast had proved a particularly vulnerable part of Britain ever since the first of the Jutish and Saxon tribes began to make landfall on it. One might say that its special position as Britain's Achilles' heel went back much farther than that since the vast majority of prehistoric migrations started on the coasts of Kent and East Sussex, while in the dim days of earlier prehistory the Shakespeare Cliff by Dover was linked with Cap Gris Nez by a narrow neck of land, which was the key to the infiltration of European cultures into Britain. It is no surprise to find that the Roman legionaries and the Norman cavalry and bowmen landed within a few miles of each other.

Though Norman William had no special cause to fear attack from the Continent, he had every reason to regard all as his enemies who were not his friends. That is the underlying reason for the intricate scheme of castle and earthwork defences which were thrown up in the south-east. In East Sussex, for instance, there is a castle to guard every gap in the rampart of the South Downs, with Lewes guarding the point where the river Ouse cuts its way through the hills, Bramber similarly guarding the Adur gap, Arundel that of the Arun, and Chichester the point where the downs recede from the sea and leave a fertile coastal strip which was particularly vulnerable to attack.

Similarly in Kent the most impressive series of Norman fortresses is that which guards the line of the main supply route from the Continent to London, a route which roughly followed the line of the Roman road, Watling Street, from Dover through Canterbury and Rochester to London. As well as being the chief supply route to London this road was a link with central and

northern England, as it had been in Roman times. That is why the Norman castle of Dover guards an important port of entry, Canterbury guards the ford over the Stour, Rochester that over the Medway, and London—the White Tower—that over the Thames. It is no accident that these fortresses were built in the strongest possible style of which even the Norman masons with their great experience of the passive strength of materials could devise.

If a map showing the medieval castles of England is studied it will be seen that most of the great trade routes leading out of London were similarly guarded, each castle being placed at a strategic point, not only to protect the trade route but to act as a spring-board for attack in case of a Saxon uprising. Colchester, Hedingham, Norwich and Rising are four such castles which between them dominate the greater part of East Anglia. There were, of course, a number of other castles constructed in Norfolk and Suffolk, and indeed in Essex before the end of the twelfth century, but they were subsidiary to these four great fortresses, of which Colchester was by far the largest, and indeed the largest Norman castle in Britain.

Relatively few, however, were constructed in Essex because in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Forest of Waltham, otherwise known as the Forest of Essex, still reached from the banks of the Lea across the county to within a few miles of the coastal plain, and apart from Colchester there were few important towns. Most of the Essex population still lived in the Anglo-Saxon settlements which had been founded about four hundred years before and had not grown much beyond their early limits. Nevertheless, small market towns like Chipping Ongar were defended by minor castles and the development of this countryside was far from neglected by the Normans, and more especially by the descendants of the Anglo-Norman families to which the land was granted. Most of the towns of central England had their castles, too, some of them, like Kenilworth, as elaborate and powerful as those which protected the south-eastern counties and the main trade routes, but the majority by comparison small and with less powerful defences.

When we come to the Welsh Marches and the border country of the north we find a concentration of castles as impressive as that in
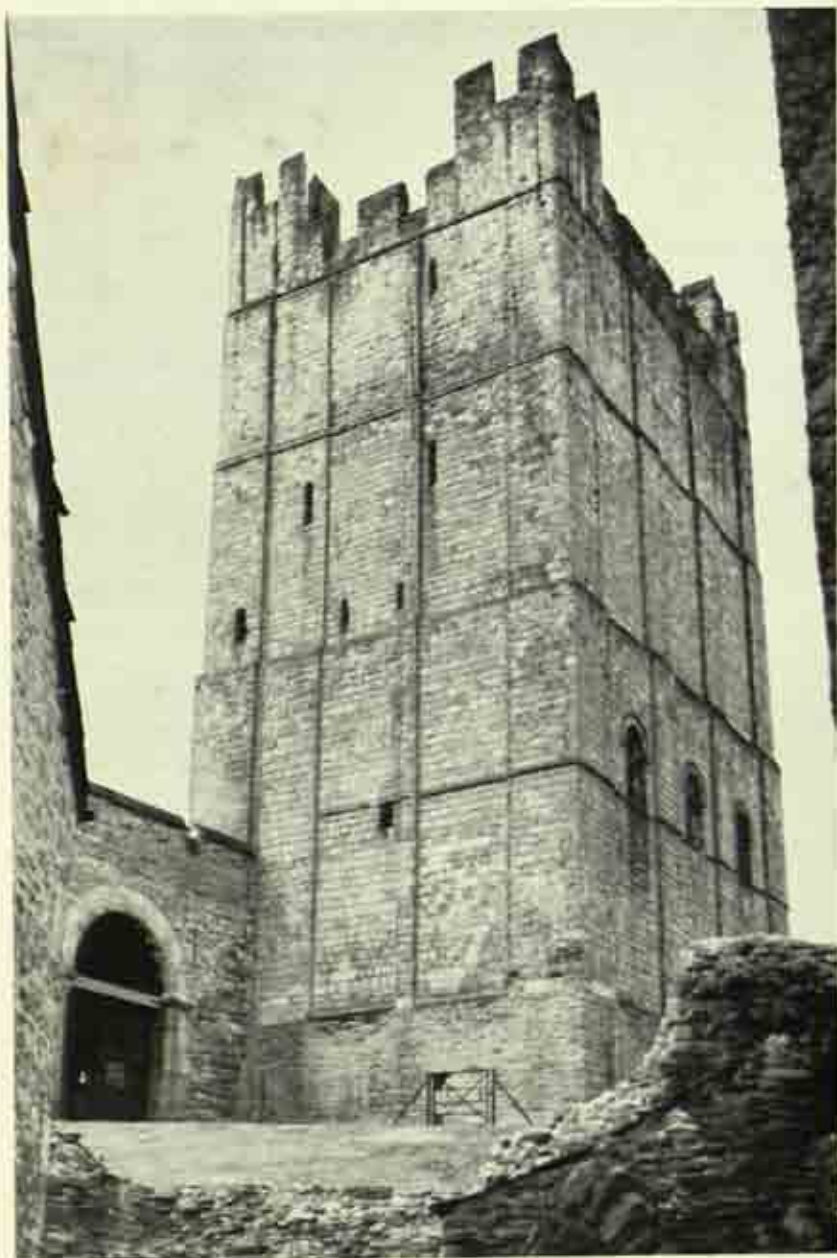
Richmond Castle, Yorkshire. This is the square late Norman keep of the castle of Richmond, a keep which was intended as a last line of defence, in contrast with the earlier Norman keeps which were designed as residences

From Fortress to Manor-house. Kenilworth Castle was originally a Norman strong-point. When it was converted into a palace the Norman keep (*above*) was retained, though no longer intended for defence. Penshurst Place (*below*) was never a castle. It originated as a nobleman's dwelling-place. Though mainly dating from the sixteenth century, it retains its Gothic hall

south-eastern England and a strategic pattern in their distribution which reflected the still unsettled state of society in those areas. In the districts bordering on Wales and Scotland, too, William and his successors departed from their normal plan of dividing the Anglo-Saxon holdings in such a way as to give the new landlords rights over widely separated farming country. Here the most trusted of William's lieutenants were given more or less absolute authority over tightly knit domains so that noblemen like Roger de Montgomery, the Earl of Shrewsbury, wielded absolute power over their 'dominions', acted to all intents and purposes independently of the king, and lived in princely state.

From the Norman point of view the Marcher earls did a remarkably good job. Later they proved a thorn in the side of weaker English sovereigns. But in the first few decades of Norman rule they effectively held the Welsh in check and caused their sovereign no great embarrassment. Such a method of government in these outlying districts was essential if good order was to be preserved. Gone were the days of high-speed paved roads such as linked together the farthest corners of the Roman province of Britain. Gone apparently was the will to build military roads as such. The paving of the Roman highways had disappeared. Their place had been taken by muddy tracks linking Anglo-Saxon settlement with settlement, many of which became totally impassable when the heavy autumn rains of the west country set in.

With the Court established in London and with the sovereign often abroad, either waging a holy war or dealing with recalcitrant vassals in Normandy, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the Welsh to have overrun the western part of the Norman kingdom and to establish themselves far to the east of the Severn and the Dee. In Wales, and to a lesser extent in Scotland, there was none of the lazy acquiescence in Norman rule which characterized the Saxons. Celtic Wales remained a *terra incognita* so far as an English or Anglo-Norman culture was concerned. Its peoples were nationalist and highly independent, warlike and brave to the point of foolhardiness.

The Normans penetrated across the flat Vale of Glamorgan as far as the level lands of Pembrokeshire. They made successful forays across the northern coastal plain and carried their armies

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into the valleys of central Wales, especially those of the Wye, the Monnow and the Usk. The Welsh people wisely retreated before them and took refuge in the mountain valleys and among the hills of central Wales which gave every advantage to the Welsh leaders, who knew every possible way across them, and provided an almost insuperable obstacle to Anglo-Norman troops.

Though the Normans established themselves in some of the richest parts of Wales, their tenure was always slender. They were in imminent danger of being attacked by hordes of Welsh tribesmen whose arms may have been poor but whose spirit was indomitable. So here, too, their only possible answer to the dilemma was the building of castles near enough to each other to provide a genuine line of communication and large enough to hold, when occasion made it necessary, a sizeable band of armed men as well as the Norman landlord and his family. By this means limited cultivation of the valleys was made possible, but no colonists in darkest Africa during the last few hundred years have lived and worked in greater peril to their lives and property than these Anglo-Norman farmer-soldiers.

Apart from the chains of fortresses guarding the valleys of Central and South Wales there was a number of stronger castles built by the Marcher earls—the castles of Chester and Shrewsbury, of Ludlow and Gloucester and Chepstow. It is often said that the insensate cruelty of some of these Marcher earls put back the union of England and Wales by hundreds of years. Certainly a man like Hugh Lupus inspired hatred which persisted for centuries after he was dead and should have been forgotten. As the Normans became more anglicized or, to put it in another way, England became truly Anglo-Norman, the hatred inspired by these provincial governors may well in Welsh minds have been transferred to the English people as a whole, and that may be one of the factors which has kept alive the spirit of Welsh nationalism to the present day.

There is, however, another way of looking at the matter. The Normans regarded England, and Wales too, as their birthright, which to secure they thought of as a duty to God as well as to themselves. It is especially noteworthy that in the crowded life of Roger de Montgomery, whose main preoccupation always must

have been to ensure that marauding bands of Welshmen did not cross the Severn, he nevertheless recognized a duty to give service to the religious life of the people and founded monasteries at Much Wenlock and Shrewsbury, in the latter of which he was enrolled as a monk shortly before his death.

The history of Shrewsbury castle is typical of that of the castles of the Marcher country. By the time of the Norman Conquest Shrewsbury was already a considerable town and one which even though it escaped the ravages of the Norse invasions had all too often suffered in the recurrent conflicts between the Anglo-Saxon peoples and the Welsh, and also in the war which ended in the accession of King Canute. It was regarded as a key to the northern part of the Marcher country, and it is likely that there was some rudimentary earthwork protecting it before the occupation. Its site is well endowed by nature for defence, and, like Ludlow, it was an ideal choice for an administrative and trading centre in close proximity to enemy territory, since it is almost encircled by the river Severn, itself a formidable obstacle and one easily defended. Such artificial defences as were necessary were concentrated to the north-west of the settlement, where it was not protected by the broad moat of the river, where, in fact, the medieval castle was built, and its defences later augmented by strong town walls.

In view of its strategic and commercial importance, it was natural that William I should give Shrewsbury, together with the greater part of Shropshire and considerable areas outside the modern county, to one of the few lieutenants whom he felt he could really trust. Roger was a kinsman as well as a friend, and one of the leading nobles in Normandy. Within a few years of the occupation he was holding in trust many hundreds of manors and parcelling them out among scores of his own followers, brave knights all of them, knowing full well the perils which would beset them in this vast colonizing exploit. It was Roger, too, who was responsible for the building of the first castle of masonry.

During the greater part of his lifetime a state of uneasy peace was maintained, a tribute to his organizing genius as well as to the loyalty of his followers and the strength of the defences which he raised. Unfortunately nothing has survived of the Norman castle, except possibly a single gateway towards Shrewsbury School, but

even this is very doubtful. Excavation, however, has shown that apart from the inner castle, probably raised on a mound and utilizing the natural slope of the land, there was an extensive bailey protected by a strong wall of masonry enclosing a sizeable part of the area which is now occupied by the modern town. One record has it that two hundred existing houses were destroyed to clear the ground for the bailey. Such actions were commonplace in the Middle Ages and were defended on the ground of expediency. Certainly the area delineated was sufficient to house a large body of troops, which was absolutely essential if the security of the town and the surrounding agricultural land was to be assured.

We know, too, the names of two churches founded by Roger within the castle confines, the Chapel of St. Michael in the inner bailey, and the Chapel of St. Nicholas in the outer bailey. The latter was still standing in the early part of the nineteenth century and was replaced by the modern St. Nicholas's Church.

As happened in so many of the Norman strongholds and Norman-held estates, the death of a particularly able administrator and commander in the field like Roger led to chaos. Roger's second son, Hugh, inherited the earldom of Shrewsbury but lived only a few years before he was killed in battle against the mixed Celtic and Viking army of the kingdom of North Wales. Then Roger's elder son, Robert de Belesme, who had inherited Roger's Norman estates, succeeded his younger brother. He recognized no allegiance to William II and, looking forward to the time when he was certain to be in conflict with the sovereign, immediately started to strengthen the defences of Shrewsbury, and to build ancillary castles such as that of Bridgnorth.

Though the reign of William II passed without open conflict, as soon as Henry I succeeded to the throne Robert was in open rebellion and the King in person led a strong army to quell what on the face of it appeared to be a highly dangerous insurrection. The insurrection was duly quelled after the castle of Shrewsbury, which had been thought to be impregnable, was taken by storm. The castle, together with the earldom, was escheated to the throne. That did not prevent the castle being held on behalf of Matilda in the following reign, and it was once more taken by storm after being besieged by an army again led in person by the sovereign.

During the reign of Henry II, who saw the inherent danger to the throne of a number of castles held by potentially rebellious noblemen, many of the minor castles of Shropshire were destroyed or left to moulder away. But the King saw the great strategic value of Shrewsbury, and he, like many of his successors, used it for a spring-board of attack against the Welsh. At the beginning of the thirteenth century it was besieged and captured by a Welsh army led by Llewellyn. Although Llewellyn withdrew, it was probably again in Welsh hands several times during the following two decades and on one occasion, probably in 1232, its buildings were burnt and its garrison put to the sword.

During the civil war of Henry III's reign the castle, now repaired but only partially rebuilt, was held against the King and once again besieged and taken by storm. It remained for Edward I to restore the order which had prevailed during the reign of the first Norman king. Then again the castle and town of Shrewsbury played a major part as a spring-board for attack, while the castle was wholly rebuilt with stronger defences than ever before to the order of the King. It became one of the chain of fortresses stretching through North Wales to Caernarvon and Harlech which were designed to hold the Welsh in check. In fact it achieved its purpose remarkably well for many generations. Much of the present structure dates from this Edwardian rebuilding, including part of the Great Hall, much of the curtain wall, and some of the watch towers.

As the Welsh menace receded so the defences of Shrewsbury were allowed to fall into disrepair. It is significant that by the time of the Wars of the Roses the Duke of York chose Ludlow rather than Shrewsbury as his headquarters. It was not until the beginning of the Civil War that the battlements were once more restored and the walls repaired. The castle was garrisoned in the Royalist cause but was reduced well before the end of the war, probably in the autumn of 1645 or early in 1646. It was slighted and gradually fell into irreparable decay, until it was converted into a private house towards the end of the eighteenth century. Today the Great Hall is used as the Corporation council chamber, while parts of the wall of the inner bailey, the great gateway, one postern gate, and Laura's Tower, are all that survive to remind the visitor of

the vital part which it played in the medieval history of the country.

What a contrast the story of a southern castle such as Rochester provides with this troubled tale! Rochester was one of the strongest of the Norman fortresses, and its remains today are among the most impressive Norman ruins. From the outset it was a royal castle, its constable by tradition a churchman appointed by the king. Once built it was never materially enlarged or strengthened, as the pure Norman workmanship of the keep amply demonstrates. Doubtless it served its purpose as a token of royal power over the town which was rapidly growing round the adjacent cathedral. Records show that it played a part, albeit an insignificant one, in a few of the domestic wars which marked the history of England in the centuries following its construction. But that is all. By the sixteenth century it was already in a state of disrepair and has only survived in its present ruinous form by a near-miracle.

The present keep was not completed until the beginning of the twelfth century, but there was an earlier fortress on the same site which was begun within a few years of William of Normandy setting foot on English soil. This earlier castle, the chief strength of which probably lay in its earthworks, was besieged by William II in 1088 when Bishop Odo, then constable, revolted against the Crown.

Such historic happenings as were centred round the keep and palatial buildings of the present castle were concentrated into the thirteenth century. By far the most important was the siege of 1215, when once more the constable of the castle refused to accept the suzerainty of his sovereign, King John, and the King in person led the siege, which lasted three months. The constable and many of his retainers were dispossessed of their land and, according to one account, incarcerated at Corfe.

Only one year passed before Louis, the Dauphin of France, who was helping the barons in their struggle against the throne, laid siege to it, but in this case the siege was soon lifted. The same was true in 1264, when Simon de Montfort sought to capture the castle in order to open the way between London and the south-east coast. In this case the castle quite admirably achieved the

purpose for which it had been built and Simon was compelled to withdraw to London.

One other incident in English history is linked with Rochester Castle—the ill-fated insurrection of Wat Tyler, who roused thousands of Kentish men to march on London to gain the redress of its real and imagined wrongs. Communications even in a relatively thickly populated county like Kent were so slight in the fourteenth century that the constable, Sir John Newton, had no forewarning of the approach of the poorly armed mob with Tyler at its head. Meeting little opposition, the rebels marched into the castle, seized the governor, and set free the numerous prisoners who were confined in the dungeons. If the constable had had the least inkling of threatened danger the peasant army of Wat Tyler could have had no chance of making any impression on the still formidable curtain wall, still less on the keep.

Many other castles of the south have had a similarly uneventful life, while few, if any, played such a significant role even in the Civil War as the strongholds of the Midlands and west. The same link between Church and State as is attested by the episcopal status of the early constables of Rochester is shown by the north-country castle of Durham, but in all other particulars the history of Durham castle is much nearer to that of Shrewsbury.

The geographical situation of Durham is remarkably similar to that of Shrewsbury, with the river Wear almost enclosing it in a wide loop as the Severn does Shrewsbury. Its strategic importance too was similar except that the enemies against whom it had to guard were from Scotland instead of Wales.

Durham Cathedral had been founded in 995, when the bishopric was transferred from Chester le Street and a cathedral church was founded to serve as a fitting home for the mortal remains of St. Cuthbert which had originally been at Lindisfarne, one of the monastic houses sacked and burnt during the period of the Viking invasions.

However, it was due to no special piety on William's part that Durham was chosen as one of the chief centres of Norman authority in the north. Rather his recognition of its impregnable position and the fact that it was already a bishopric determined the choice. He saw that he could combine warlike operations with

peaceful penetration in the name of God by appointing a suitable bishop and giving him authority not only over the cathedral but over a strong castle, together with its garrison, and over the whole county. So it happened that the Norman castle, which still stands, was the official palace of the bishops of Durham from 1072, with only few breaks, until 1836, and during the early part of that span of nearly 800 years the bishops were indeed bishops militant, involved not only in pacifying the people of Durham and withstanding the numerous attacks which were made by Scottish forces but also in many of the English wars of succession.

The 'insurrection of the north' had been quelled before the castle was begun, and it was some years before the county which was totally devastated by William's early severity began to achieve once more a modest prosperity under the Norman knights and churchmen who held their land from the bishop. Durham was what is known as a county palatine; that is to say, the bishop as overlord had special privileges and a great measure of independence in governing his 'kingdom'. Though the sovereign occasionally stepped in during the following centuries and escheated the castle to the Crown after some recalcitrant bishop had taken, as it were, the wrong side in the interminable conflicts between English kings and pretenders to the throne, a new bishop was always appointed within a few years to the same privileged position as his predecessors.

During all the attacks of the Scots, Durham held firm, while the special rights of the palatinate continued until the reign of King Henry VIII. By then it was felt that danger from the Scots as far south as Durham had receded, while the Reformation movement gave Henry every opportunity to reduce the powers of the bishops without imperilling the State or coming into open conflict with the Church. In fact the great Norman cathedral continued as such, while the prior of the monastic house attached to it became its dean and the castle continued as the bishop's official residence. The bishops may have ceased to be princes in the sixteenth century but it was another hundred years or more before all the effective powers of the palatine court had been whittled away, while the castle, because it was then no longer regarded as a castle but rather as a bishop's palace and took no part in the Civil War,

escaped the fate of most medieval strongholds when Cromwell was victorious.

Colchester Castle represents yet another phase of history, typified by Britain's castle ruins. It was the largest of all the Norman keeps, designed on a plan similar to that of the White Tower of the Tower of London (whose architect may also have been responsible for Colchester). Here the Norman master masons showed ingenuity and resource in building a castle which was as strong as any, in spite of the fact that the countryside lacked sources of building-stone. They saw around them still the substantial ruins of the Roman city of Camalodunum and used these ruins as a ready-made quarry for building the castle (as also the priory of St. Botolph and many other buildings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which have now disappeared). Today the surviving fragment of Colchester Castle is impressive enough but it is a fragment of the keep only, as opposed to ruins such as those of Rochester which still give a good impression of the castle as it must have been when it was first constructed. Colchester Castle as it is today represents only the lowest storey of the Norman fortress, which originally rose to more than three times the height of the present building. Its walls betray its origin, gleaming reddish in the evening of a fine day when the setting sun picks out the innumerable thin red Roman tiles which together with rubble from the ruined Roman buildings make up its fabric.

Colchester, like Rochester, was a royal castle designed as a rallying point for the Norman forces holding the greater part of Essex. In all probability it was completed by the early part of the twelfth century. According to a single unsupported record, it was badly damaged before the end of that century either as the result of the conflict between King Henry II and a recalcitrant constable, or in accordance with the policy of the King to dismantle unwanted castles, of which in all more than a thousand were destroyed at his order. The latter explanation is unlikely in view of Colchester's great strategic importance, not only because it held open the lines of communication between London and East Anglia but because it was an important link in the defences of the east coast against possible attack from the Continent. Certainly it was fully restored early in the thirteenth century, when King John was a

frequent visitor before its constable joined forces in the barons' war against the King and it was besieged and taken by storm by a French army which had come to England to help the sovereign to quell the rebellion.

That was virtually the end of its military history, though it remained the centre of local government in Essex for many centuries afterwards. Its chief use in this later period, however, was as a political prison which harboured alike Protestants during the reign of Queen Mary and Roman Catholics in succeeding reigns. High-ranking officers of the Scottish army too were imprisoned here in 1548 after the Battle of Pinkie, and Dutch seamen during the wars of the seventeenth century.

The so-called Siege of Colchester during the Civil War was a farce. The town was stoutly defended by Royalists against the Parliamentary army in 1648 but by then the defences of the castle had been allowed to fall into disrepair and could not have withstood a determined attack for a day. The siege was of the town rather than of the castle. However, the execution of the Royalist ringleaders in the forecourt of the castle marked the end of the castle's useful life. Thereafter it was in private hands for some time and only just escaped demolition at the end of the seventeenth century because it was thought to occupy land which was 'ripe for development'. Finally it was purchased by the Corporation of Colchester in 1920. Since then the mouldering ruins of the surviving lower floor have been roofed in and are giving appropriate service as a museum.

We can learn a great deal about the Normans from these and similar castle ruins. The most remarkable fact which appears from any survey of the castles of England and Wales is their great number. What a terrific concentration of effort they represent! What an outstanding ability in overcoming difficulties of building and labour. Even when it is conceded that the bulk of the labour force must have been drawn from the ranks of the Anglo-Saxons, the completion of such a gigantic scheme of national defence was still an achievement without parallel in the history of western Europe—and that at a time when another facet of Norman policy, that of building cathedrals and abbey churches, was occupying a great deal of the time of the expendable labour

force and the resources of the Anglo-Norman sovereigns and noblemen.

The architects or master masons were generally Norman and it is the greatest possible tribute to the skill—one might almost say the genius—not of a single man but of very many, that they were able to construct buildings, at a time when the science of architecture was in its infancy, which proved not only adequate for their immediate purpose but, in their passive strength, were capable of withstanding any attack that was made on them during the succeeding centuries.

Even if the main purpose of the castles was utilitarian, artistry was not entirely forgotten, as witness the moulded windows and doorways of the great hall of Rochester castle. It is all too easy to underestimate the dynamic quality of the Norman artistry which was thus added to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The great churches and castles and, as we shall see later, the abbeys, are mute evidence of their initiative and of the great contribution they made to the development, economic and social, of the country as a whole.

Two distinct kinds of Norman castle may be distinguished, one characterized by a square keep, the other by a shell keep. Rochester, London and Colchester, of those so far mentioned, are excellent examples of the square or rectangular keep, Durham, of the shell keep. It used to be said (and is still maintained by some) that castles with a square keep were built on virgin sites, those with a shell keep on the sites of earlier Anglo-Saxon castle mounds. Actually there are very many shell-keep castles which cannot have been preceded by Anglo-Saxon fortifications. Basically the square keep, as at Rochester, was intended as the living quarters of the constable and his family, and a number of retainers, with troops quartered in the bailey outside the keep but inside the encircling wall. The shell keep, by contrast, was intended only as the last line of defence and was never intended as a dwelling-place except in cases of emergency.

The shell keep was always positioned on a mound, the main prerequisite of which was that it should have a ready supply of drinking water, while the living quarters were in the bailey, that is, in the area enclosed within the outer walls but quite separate from the mound. Sometimes, as at Shrewsbury, there was an

inner bailey and an outer one, the former presumably designed for the baron and his entourage, the latter for the numerous troops which were needed in a castle of this kind.

The reason which led many antiquaries to suppose that such shell keeps were always on the site of Anglo-Saxon burhs was that the earthworks were constructed before the buildings of masonry. The typical Anglo-Saxon burhs, which consisted of a motte, or mound, and a bailey, or enclosure, the latter surrounded by a ditch or moat were protected by earthworks made from earth dug out of the moat. The earthworks and the mound may have been capped with timber palisades but no more. The early castles of the Normans were of a similar kind and there can be no doubt that they adopted Saxon fortifications when they found them, ultimately replacing the timber palisades with an outer wall of stone and rubble, and a shell keep of stone. But the Normans were themselves great builders of earthworks and it is equally certain that many of the motte-and-bailey type castles, especially in the west and north country, were initiated by the Normans within a year or two of the occupation. Indeed, so many of these defensive earthworks have survived without any trace of masonry that the conclusion is inescapable that a number never became castles in the modern sense of the term but were built in the years of crisis as military strong-points and then abandoned, many of them during the reign of Henry II.

The ruins of the rectangular keeps are far more impressive than those of the shell keeps, partly because they were more massively built but also because so many of the shell keeps were constructed in towns, as at Lewes in Sussex, and the pressure to use them as ready-made quarries subsequent to the Civil War (and in some cases before it) was correspondingly greater. Castles with shell keeps from their very nature were more suitable for conversion into palaces, if only because the bailey provided room for expansion, whereas the rectangular keep did not. Consequently the vast majority of the baronial castles of later medieval times originated from shell keeps, while the majority of the rectangular keeps were royal castles built primarily for the needs of war rather than residence.

The castles show one other thing very clearly. The spartan life—

spartan by any standard of comparison—which the Anglo-Norman nobility was forced to accept is reflected by the construction of the castles. Reference has already been made to the perilous nature of pioneer work on the borders of Wales and Scotland. But even if the constables of the royal castles and the barons in their slightly more spacious quarters within the bailey of a shell-keep castle were not in constant peril of their lives, they were very dependent on their own resources and lived without the slightest degree of comfort in the modern sense of the term. That much is evident from the nature of the ruins themselves. What is not so evident is that until Anglo-Saxon England was wholly pacified, it was impossible for them to leave the confines of their castle unless accompanied by an adequate guard of soldiers. Their main preoccupation must have been to secure adequate food to last them through the long winter months, when access to some of the more remote castles from the outside world was quite impossible. That is perhaps why hunting was their main pastime. In the light of their needs it became not only their pleasure but their business.

Towards the end of the twelfth century conditions began to improve a little. This change is paralleled by a variation in the design of castles. Richmond Castle in Yorkshire provides the best example of this variation in design, as in the pattern of living. By its position alone Richmond fires the imagination. Situated on a precipitous rock rising above the river Swale, it is clearly impregnable on the river side and is protected by a deep ravine on two other sides. On the fourth side it dominates the old town which miraculously preserves the air of a medieval city in spite of its many modern shops and houses.

At first glance Richmond Castle looks like a rectangular keep such as Rochester or London, because a lofty, square, embattled tower, a keep in every sense of the term, rises boldly at one corner of it. Closer inspection shows that this keep is virtually windowless, while inside the walls it shows not the slightest trace of having been designed as a dwelling-place. It was, in fact, a last line of defence in case of attack, just like the shell keeps of the Norman palatial homes. The home of the baron was at the farthest corner of the bailey, where there are still enough traces of Transitional Norman architecture to show its former extent and the

relatively ample surroundings in which the noblemen who were its constables lived at the end of the twelfth century.

Meanwhile, a still more revolutionary type of fortress was making its bow, represented by the circular keeps of Conisborough in Yorkshire and Orford in Suffolk. These keeps, both of them wonderfully preserved, avoided the blind spots which are the chief weakness of the rectangular type. Though they were strictly circular within, Orford in particular appears polygonal from outside because of the number of embattled turrets which surround it, reaching from the ground to the top storey and making it possible to maintain a cross-fire of arrows on attackers from whichever direction they came. The long pursuit of the means of defence after those of attack had begun. Orford looks forward to the triumphs of military engineering represented by the concentric castles of Edwardian times.

From Fortress to Palace

THE reign of King Henry II saw the end of the first phase of castle building. During the protracted civil war which lasted for the greater part of the reign of King Stephen a large number of smaller fortresses, many of them merely defensive earthworks, had been thrown up by the supporters both of Stephen and of Matilda. When one reads the chronicles of the Middle Ages one is amazed at the speed with which complex engineering works were completed. Raising a 'castle' of the motte-and-bailey variety was a relatively simple piece of engineering, calling for nothing but manpower and muscular effort. How quickly such an earthwork could be completed depended upon the labour force available. There is a credible record that in the reign of William I such a fortress was completed in little more than a week. Some of the smaller castles raised in Stephen's reign may well have taken no longer than that to build. It was really only a matter of digging a deep moat and piling the earth and rock from the moat to construct the motte, and digging another more extensive moat round the bailey, using the material excavated for the outer defence.

The earthworks and the moats had to be shored up so that the sides were as nearly perpendicular as possible to make the task of the attackers more difficult. Also in some cases streams were diverted to fill the moat with water, but many moats were never filled; and many of these earthworks, though they were doubtless defended by barricades and palisades, were never rebuilt in masonry.

Henry II ordered the destruction of more than a thousand castles. A large proportion were doubtless of this kind, though there is also evidence that Henry penalized a number of the Anglo-Norman nobility who had been responsible for building several more-elaborate castles for themselves and their knights.

Except for the borderland of Wales and Scotland we therefore

pass in the story of castles from the middle of the twelfth century into the thirteenth century, and more especially to the latter part of that century. During the interval a few of the Norman fortresses were reconstructed in the Early English style and strengthened with new fortifications, while additional fortresses were constructed in the Welsh Marches, reaching up the valleys into the mountains of central and south Wales, and so completing a complex pattern which had been begun by the Normans.

When Edward I came to the throne in 1272 great changes had taken place in the social and economic life of the country as also in military science. To people who lived at the end of the thirteenth century the Norman period seemed long past and everything connected with it was regarded as obsolete. Noblemen, and the increasing number of prosperous farmers who were not of noble birth, were demanding better accommodation than had been possible in the eleventh or twelfth centuries. For the first time since the heyday of the Roman Province the ideal of privacy was resurrected and there were few who were content to live as their Anglo-Norman ancestors had done, in a communal dwelling shared by their servants and retainers.

At the same time, the inherent military defects of the Norman castle became apparent. New methods of warfare—represented by new ideals of offence and defence alike—had become known through the intermingling of eastern and western ideas in the course of the Crusades. All these changes were reflected in the design of castles, and especially of those built during the reign of Edward I, who is so closely associated with them if only because they are generally known as Edwardian. Nevertheless, some of the new type were built before Edward succeeded to the throne and others after he had died.

We have already seen how the rectangular keep gave way during the twelfth century to a keep which was circular inside but defended on its exterior by projecting turrets or towers which enabled a crossfire to be kept up around the whole outer wall. That was only a temporary expedient. The real failing of the Norman castle was that in spite of the massiveness of its construction and the thickness of its walls, the keep, whether intended as a permanent residence, as in the case of the rectangular keeps, or as a last place

of refuge, as in the case of the shell keeps, did not provide a really effective defence once the outer walls had been breached and the bailey occupied by the enemy. Although few of the keeps were actually taken by storm, a number of garrisons were forced into ignominious surrender by starvation since, even if spring water were available, enough food could not be stored in the keep to maintain the garrison during a long siege. Sorties had to be made to win the bare minimum of necessities for subsistence. Once a sortie was attempted an alert enemy was in a position to command surrender. In theory the outer ward or bailey of a Norman castle defended the inner one, and the inner one, in its turn, the keep. In practice the outer and inner baileys were nearly always overrun together and the only effective resistance was offered by the keep.

The outstandingly new principle of the Edwardian or, as it is more appropriately called, the concentric castle, was the disappearance of the keep and the protection of the inner ward by two or three concentric walls, each protected by projecting towers or turrets and the inevitable ditch or moat. This in practice meant that if an attacker were able to scale the outer wall and gain a foothold in the outer bailey or ward, he was faced immediately with another battlemented wall often stronger than the first. If he were fortunate enough to overcome that obstacle, yet another wall awaited him before he could gain access to the inner ward, which was the nucleus of the castle and contained the greater part of the castle buildings.

It is scarcely a matter for surprise that such mighty fortresses, which certainly owed a great deal to ideas imported from the Near East, proved even less vulnerable to attack than the Norman castles, in spite of the greater passive strength of the rectangular Norman keep. Although the keep as such was abandoned, the gatehouse of these later castles was still further strengthened and enlarged, so that it took the place of a keep as a last place of refuge in the unlikely event of the mural defences being overcome.

Part of the fascination of studying the castle ruins of Britain is that scarcely any two castles have precisely the same design. The only thing common to all concentric castles is that they are concentric. In detail every one differs from every other one. In part these differences are due to variations in the kind of site selected

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for the building of the castle. The choice of a suitable place for defence was just as important at the end of the thirteenth century as it had been in the eleventh, and the castles of North Wales especially demonstrate the unerring instinct which led the castle architects to build on sites which were perfectly designed by nature for defence. So the castle of Conway is built on a rocky peninsula with almost sheer sides jutting out into the Conway river, a site that could be attacked only from the side of the medieval town, which was itself defended by strong walls. The strict concentric principle was not applied here. It would have been futile to have done so. A single strong wall was quite sufficient on three sides to augment the defences provided by the rocky slopes. The architect concentrated on making the fourth side as nearly impregnable as human resources could make it.

Similarly the castle of Harlech stands on a high and precipitous rock overhanging the plain below, and overlooking hundreds of square miles of sea and the countryside of North Wales. Whereas many other castles had two gatehouses, each capable of being held as a fortress in its own right, Harlech, because of its special position, had only one, on the landward side, and that defended by a particularly deep ditch and, of course, the usual drawbridge and portcullis.

The underlying principle of all these castles was an excellent one. In fact it had been ante-dated not only by the circular keeps in late-Norman times but by a few other late-Norman castles such as Alnwick, which though obviously tentative was a commanding fortress depending for its defence chiefly on a series of interconnecting drum towers. Alnwick, in fact, is the true forerunner of the strongest of all the Edwardian castles, Caernarvon, which by a strange paradox is neither in a particularly commanding position nor protected by concentric walls. Caernarvon was partially protected by the Menai Strait on one side and a river on a second, but, for the rest, it depended on a single wall of great height and most skilled construction, together with a number of projecting towers. Though the interior is ruinous, the external walls are much as they were when they were built, and the view of the castle and the town walls, which are also in a remarkably good state of repair, offer the closest approximation in appearance to

those of a medieval town, especially when one approaches them along the road which follows the bank of the Menai Strait.

In brief, the Edwardian castle (remembering that Caerphilly in South Wales, mightiest of all the concentric castles, was nearing completion before Edward I came to the throne) represents a revolution in design, but the principles underlying it cannot be labelled effectively with a single word, though 'concentric' describes a large number of them. The fact remains that the only respect in which all are similar is that they abandon the keep of the Norman master masons, while the walls became more akin to the walls of a medieval town and by virtue of their special defences became more than a match for the current weapons of offence.

It is fascinating to attempt to recreate the methods of warfare in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. All that is known is pieced together from near-contemporary sources, which are often obscure and assume knowledge on the part of the reader which is denied to us, and, especially, from the illustrations of medieval manuscripts, which are frequently more revealing than the written word. However, it is worth making the effort to grasp the essentials of medieval attack and defence so far as it affected the castles. Generally the design of castles kept abreast of changing theory and practice of attack, which was influenced by the experience gained by the warriors of western Europe in the course of the holy wars.

It is obvious that the position had changed radically since the time of the Norman occupation of England. In the eleventh century all that the Anglo-Norman overlords had to fear was attack from ill-armed and ill-organized hordes of dissatisfied peasantry, or at most onslaughts by the relatively well-organized but still poorly armed people from across the borders of Wales and Scotland. Even the hastily raised motte-and-bailey type of castle with its timber palisade was effective against opposition of this kind, and it is doubtful whether any serious breach was made in the defences of any Norman castle by such incursions unless the gates were accidentally left open. It is, however, remarkable how often this occurred, even in later periods, not only if the gates were unlatched through treachery but when they were open and the drawbridge lowered for no other reason than because the baron or knight ensconced in his castle feared no attack.

Jack Cade gained access to Rochester Castle by this means, and it was through the same misadventure that Archbishop Simon Sudbury was done to death within the fortress of the Tower of London during Wat Tyler's insurrection. One may suspect treachery because both were extremely popular figures, not only among their own Kentish peasantry but in the country at large, but there is no positive evidence to support the theory, no reason to presuppose it in the absence of any concrete proof.

Towards the close of the Anglo-Norman period the position was very different. Now it was no longer a matter of awaiting the attack of some negligible band of insurgents, or in the northern Marches of England the attack of marauding bands of robbers bent only on securing booty. Rather it was a matter of making preparations against full-scale attack by a neighbouring land-owner, or even by the king's army. Though in general the feudal system worked well in so far as the sovereign and his chief lieu-tenants had the same end in mind—to preserve peace and ensure their own security—when civil war was imminent no man knew clearly who his enemy might be. Even if individual barons had no particular interest in the succession, it was difficult for them to decide how they could be on the winning side. If they made the right choice there was still the risk that their neighbours might join the opposition.

That is the political background of the development in castle design. In theory a castle was a defensible home and a spring-board for attack. It also had to be a refuge not only for its constable or hereditary owner and his family but also for his servants, his armed retainers, and for his sheep and cattle. In this respect the medieval castle was remarkably similar to the fortified hilltop settlement of the Early Iron Age, which was also intended to protect the tribe's stock as well as its personnel. One might go farther and say that the elaborate gatehouses of the medieval castles were the equiva-lent of the cunningly concealed and heavily protected entrances to a Maiden Castle or an Eggar Dun. The lapse of more than 1,250 years witnessed a major change in materials, a complete revolution in weapons both of offence and defence, but hardly changed the essential prerequisites for safety and only modified the theory of design.

It was, of course, when a castle was besieged, and only then, that its defences were put to the test. The weapons of siege were numerous and ingenious, but cumbersome rather than markedly effective. Probably the most practical and the most frequently used of the methods of attack was the scaling ladder, which proved successful against the comparatively low outer wall of a Norman bailey, even allowing for the obstacle presented by the ditch or moat which surrounded it. When it is borne in mind that the permanent garrison of some of the larger castles of the thirteenth century numbered less than fifty armed men, it is obvious that a large investing force could make use of these scaling ladders under cover of night with remarkably good effect.

It has to be assumed when considering medieval warfare that lives were regarded as readily expendable and that the commander of an investing force would have no compunction in sending forward a few hundred men with the absolute certainty that no more than one in four would survive. Nor is that surprising when one bears in mind the Japanese attitude to death in warfare, and the appalling loss of life which was accepted as inevitable during the First World War. Among many peoples, including some Christian ones, the impression has persisted until recent times that there was a special place in heaven for those who lost their lives in battle, especially if the war could be regarded, however mistakenly, as a holy one, which in the Middle Ages was synonymous with it being approved by the Pope.

However effective the scaling ladders may have been in securing the outer ward of a Norman castle, when a concentric castle or one like Caernarvon depending on a single embattled wall was besieged, the projecting towers enabled the defenders to bring to bear a cross-fire of arrows on the attackers near the walls and gave them a fair opportunity to pick off every single one of the attackers. Moreover, where there was a passage-way or parapet walk on the inside of the walls, it was possible to augment the effect of the showers of arrows by dropping stones or burning oil on the heads of the attackers.

When an all-out attack was being made by the investing force, the defenders sought to destroy the assault party by a continuous shower of arrows. The success of the scaling ladder was virtually

over when the Edwardian castle was perfected. Then it was the
turn of the battering ram, a contrivance of timber hung by chains
from a frame and operated manually. The necessarily intrepid
warriors who worked it were required to wheel it up to the walls
or the gate of the castle, protected only by a wooden penthouse,
and then to release it again and again against the solid masonry in
the hope, rather than in the expectation, that it would pierce the
walls. If they were successful it was a comparatively easy matter to
enlarge the hole so that several soldiers abreast could enter it.

There was also a contrivance rather like a hook on the end of a
long pole used to pick out stones from the wall, but there is no
record that this was ever successful. Most startling of all was the
siege tower, a piece of equipment used again and again with suc-
cess on the Continent, though records of its use in Britain are
deficient. The siege tower was in appearance rather similar to the
look-out towers erected by the Forestry Commission, a lattice-
work of timber with a staircase leading to an upper platform. The
assault troops gathered on this upper platform, which was pro-
tected on all sides against arrow-fire, and were then wheeled
forward to the walls of the castle, the obstacle of the moat being
overcome by filling a part of it with brushwood and laying planks
across the brushwood. The upper platform of the tower was then
on a level with, or higher than, the top of the castle walls and the
assault was made by lowering a hinged platform which acted as a
drawbridge between the tower and the parapet of the walls.
Attacking troops swarmed across this drawbridge, rather like the
troops on a warship of classical Greece boarded an enemy ship
after the two had been locked together by grappling irons.

There was one other method of attack. It was the medieval
equivalent of a modern mining operation. The attackers dug a
short tunnel under one of the angles of a keep or, in the case of
the Edwardian castle, under one of the angles of the walls. They
shored up the tunnel with timber and later filled it with brush-
wood. When the operation was complete they set fire to the
brushwood, hoping that the shoring timbers would be burnt or
charred and would ultimately collapse so that the angle of the
castle would fall into the tunnel. Needless to say, the mining opera-
tion was fraught with deadly danger, even when it was carried out

under cover of night or fog, because at the start the attackers were exposed to arrows, stones, burning material and all the other artillery of the defenders against which a wooden penthouse over them was only a slight protection. However, several of these un-likely attempts at attack were successful, notably at Rochester in 1215, though even then the partial collapse of one corner of the keep did not prove a fatal embarrassment to the defenders.

The upshot was that by the end of the thirteenth century defence was far in advance of attack. Though 'impregnable', the adjective most often applied to medieval castles, was not fully justified, the classical weapons of siege were seldom effective in helping an investing force to reduce a stronghold. No, the enemy most often to be feared was the traitor within the gates or the spectre of starvation. Yet even starvation was not such a powerful enemy as it might seem. Although the storage capacity of a castle was limited, by slaughtering sheep, cattle and other livestock the garri-son could sustain itself for a considerable period, in some cases for more than a year. The real difficulty before the time of professional soldiers was to maintain an investing force intact. The feudal system might require a knight to supply a definite number of armed horsemen for the service of his overlord. It might equally demand that the lower orders in the feudal system should be pre-pared to follow their leader into battle on foot, but there were still fields to be tended and harvests to be gathered. Otherwise starva-tion would face the attackers as much as the besieged. That is why so many sieges proved abortive and were finally lifted before the garrison of the castle had been forced to surrender.

The social development which the later medieval castles repre-sent is no less remarkable. They stood for the emergence of the baronial and royal palace as opposed to the castle designed solely for military needs. Something was said in the previous chapter of the rigours of life for those who lived in a Norman keep. In the Edwardian castle conditions were entirely different. There was perhaps not luxury in the modern sense of the term, but there was scope for modest comfort and for a fuller and far less austere way of life. A few, even of the Norman castles, had looked forward to this change of accent. The hall of Oakham Castle, for instance, still wonderfully preserved, was a fine dwelling-place by any

standard of comparison, with the accent on comfort and elegance rather than on defensive strength. But Oakham was the exception which proved the rule. The palatial residence of late-Norman date on the opposite side of the enclosure to the keep at Richmond comes nearer to the ideals of the thirteenth century but it is still far removed from the truly palatial establishments which were being constructed during the reign of Edward I.

The dwelling-place was invariably in the inner ward, built under the protection of the walls and looking out on to an inner square. This meant that the windows could be enlarged. In a Norman keep the window openings on the lower floors were mere slits designed to prevent the entry of stray arrows, and only on the upper floors where the hall was situated, as at Rochester, were the windows large enough to admit adequate light, or to allow the smoke from the wood fires to escape. The windows in the later medieval castles looking inward were, by contrast, large and often beautifully moulded. Though the hall remained the principal apartment in the castle, there were numerous other rooms, including separate bed-rooms for the lord and his family, withdrawing rooms, and various ceremonial apartments. The hall at Conway is more than a hundred feet long, while the principal 'separate' rooms at Caernarvon look forward to the multiplicity of apartments in the Tudor manor-house.

In one or two places, notably at Grosmont in Herefordshire, the hall projects beyond the main wall of the castle. The reason for this is unknown, since the obvious solution—that the hall was added later than the castle was built—is not supported. Perhaps the countryside around Grosmont was well settled and it was felt that the necessity for defence was not so great as in most other places. That is only speculation. In the vast majority of cases the hall, like the other private apartments of the castle, was protected by the full strength of the castle's defences.

Another interesting feature of the castles of this period is that the kitchens were far larger and formed a much more important part of the buildings than they had done in earlier ones. And, of course, there was always a chapel, sometimes more than one, just as there had been in most of the Norman castles, as in the White Tower of the Tower of London. Just as the church was the centre-

piece of the village or town community, so more care and money was lavished on the chapel in the castle than on any other part of it, except perhaps the great hall. Elaborate stone carving was the rule rather than the exception, and even the lord's private oratory, when it was separate from the main chapel of the castle, was often a fine example of Gothic architecture.

The end of the thirteenth century and the first few decades of the following one represented the period in which a number of major conversions were carried out to bring old castles into line with new ideas. This was especially true in the areas of special danger, such as the Welsh Marches, where some of the castles refortified in this period date back to Norman times, while derived from the frontier defences of Fitzhamon, Earl of Gloucester and Lord of Cardiff, or Hugh Lupus, the Norman Earl of Chester, or Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury.

In all these castles, the Norman keep, if it still existed, was retained as, for instance, at Pembroke and Cardiff, but it was degraded and no longer formed the most important part of the defences. Sometimes it was left as a gatehouse, giving access to the inner ward; sometimes, as in the Tower of London, it was left as an entirely detached tower surrounded by new defensive walls raised in accordance with the latest theories of defence.

It was not, however, solely the military strongholds which were remodelled but also the earlier castles which were the seats of the powerful landlords in the relatively peaceful areas of central and southern England. Some of these palatial residences as reconstructed during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries approached the elegance of the castellated manor-houses of the fifteenth century as surely as the castles of Orford and Conisborough raised at the end of the Norman period forecast the more intricate defences of the Edwardian castle.

A few examples picked almost at random will illustrate better than any general description the uniform trend not only towards more reliable defences but towards a more ample style of living within the confines of the castle walls. Kenilworth is one of the finest examples of castles which were exposed to attack from the hostile Welsh or Scots. Today its ruins are among the most magnificent and imposing of any in Britain but it is wholly ruinous in the

sense that no substantial part of the castle as it was at any time in its long history has survived intact and it is necessary to reconstruct it in the imagination at every stage of its history.

The first castle at Kenilworth was built about sixty years after the Norman occupation, although there is evidence that a defensive earthwork had been constructed fifty years before. However, the square Norman keep was completed during the reign of Henry I and for the following century it remained a royal castle, its fortifications being well maintained and buildings outside the keep being added to as occasion demanded. In 1254 the castle passed to Simon de Montfort through his marriage with Eleanor, the daughter of Henry III, and remained in his possession until his death. The ruins of the Norman keep are still spectacular, while here and there in the later buildings it is possible to detect Norman material. Probably the keep, or Caesar's Tower as it is popularly called, was originally of four storeys. Its walls are still more than twelve feet thick.

During the tenure of Simon de Montfort a complete reconstruction was carried out on the concentric plan, but here the keep was neither converted into a gatehouse nor left standing free but utilized to form an angle tower at one corner of the walls of the inner ward. The new concentric castle was regarded reasonably enough as one of the most powerful in England but its defences still did not satisfy its ambitious owner. De Montfort, at enormous cost, strengthened it further by elaborating a series of artificial lakes designed to act as super moats. These lakes filled the whole valley which surrounds three sides of the castle and covered a total area of more than a hundred acres. An unusually deep and broad moat linked the ends of the lakes and provided an extra defence on the fourth side.

It was not long before these fabulous defences were put to the test. After de Montfort's death the castle was held by his son in an apparently hopeless cause. It was closely invested by the King's army for the better part of a year. Many attempts were made to take it by storm but without avail. The King perhaps knew it was only a matter of time before it surrendered provided the investing army could be maintained at full strength. And maintained it was. In the end the castle capitulated, but by then there was not a scrap

of food left within its walls and those of its garrison who had not died from starvation were emaciated to an extreme degree.

Nearly a century passed before Kenilworth came into the hands of John of Gaunt by marriage. Once again a major reconstruction was carried out. We can see today the work of John of Gaunt's architect in the palatial establishment within the inner ward generally known as Lancaster's Buildings. Here are the most lavish architecture and decorative stonework of which architects of the latter part of the fourteenth century were capable. The palatial rooms, which include the Great Hall, a truly magnificent kitchen, and a series of state rooms, evoke a vivid impression of the time when Kenilworth was at the height of its fame. The hall, which is nearly 100 feet long and 50 feet broad, lighted by fine windows, including one graceful oriel window, was certainly as handsome a medieval hall as any in Britain. In spite of Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*, which is focused on a later period in the castle's history, the time of John of Gaunt assuredly marked its zenith. However, it is historic fact rather than fiction that the castle and the land surrounding it were given in 1562 by Queen Elizabeth to Robert Dudley, who entertained the Queen here in sumptuous style, as recorded by the novelist, in 1575. Leicester's Buildings, though almost as ruinous as the more ancient parts of the castle, make an effective contrast, in their typical Elizabethan style, with the Norman and Gothic styles of the other parts.

Why, it is often asked, did this great and historic palace fall into such grievous disrepair? The answer is simple—virtually the same answer that must be given to the question in respect of almost any other castle. At the close of the Civil War it was presented as a reward for loyal service to a group of Oliver Cromwell's officers who, seeing no other use for it, dismantled anything that had no apparent immediate value and sold what they could of the fabric piecemeal for contemporary building.

As Kenilworth is typical of the palatial castles of the Midlands converted in the fourteenth century, so Ludlow is typical of the castle palaces of the Welsh borderland. Here there was a strong Norman keep on the site of an earlier fortification as at Kenilworth, the keep probably being under construction before the end of the eleventh century. It is still disputed whether Roger de

Montgomery or Roger de Lacy was the originator of the Norman keep, though it was almost certainly the latter. This fortress, though strong and rather similar to the Norman keep of Kenilworth, and, like it, four storeys high, was neither in point of size nor passive strength among the most powerful castles of Norman England.

Ludlow had yet to achieve its later medieval fame. It was chosen as the site for a castle no doubt because the precipitous rock overhanging the river Teme on which it is built was a site ideally suited for defence. Moreover the junction of the Teme and two of its tributaries was a vitally important point in the scheme of communications on the borderland of Wales. Its commanding position can be judged in the light of the wonderful panorama which can be obtained from the parapet walk at the summit of the keep. It played a distinguished part in the long-drawn-out struggle between the Normans and the Welsh and demonstrated its strength, too, in the civil wars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially in the war in the reign of King Stephen, when it was held for Matilda, and besieged by the King's army, but never surrendered.

The next stage in its history provides a dramatic link with Kenilworth. Simon de Montfort, who had shown the way by the reconstruction of his own castle, fell upon its relatively obsolete defences and took it by storm after the briefest of sieges. The castle passed to the Mortimer family early in the fourteenth century and its conversion to a castle of the concentric type was due to the initiative of Roger Mortimer, the work being carried out some time prior to 1335. Here the keep was degraded into a protective bastion of the inner ward, including the unique and singularly beautiful circular Norman chapel (to be precise, only a part of the original chapel).

All that remains of the palatial residence built by Mortimer stands on the north side of the quadrangle. The Great Hall is similar in its proportions to that of John of Gaunt's at Kenilworth, though only about two-thirds the size, and like that of Kenilworth is built above a crypt or basement. As at Kenilworth, too, there were a number of other state apartments of noble proportions.

The similarity with Kenilworth continues in the history of Ludlow subsequent to the fourteenth century. Under the Mortimers and their descendants it became the premier castle of the west country, and the seat of the Lords President of the Marches, a palace at which many English sovereigns were proud to be entertained, and under a succession of enlightened Lords President a great centre of cultural life. As at Kenilworth, a new and imposing block of domestic buildings was added during the reign of Queen Elizabeth when Sir Henry Sidney was Lord President. The ruins of these stand adjacent to the keep on the opposite side of the court to the fourteenth-century great hall.

The first impression given by Ludlow is that it was first and foremost a fortress, but it was clearly dedicated after the first few centuries of its life to the arts of peace rather than to those of war. The first performance of Milton's *Comus* was given in the Great Hall. Samuel Butler wrote most of *Hudibras* here during his tenure of office. Successive Lords President gave encouragement to literature and endeavoured with a great measure of success to make Ludlow the cultural capital of the Marches.

No, it is not accurate to think of the ruins of English castles as the symbols only of siege and bloodshed. When once the threat of internal strife and external attack had receded, many of them became gracious residences in every sense of the term. They became the great houses in which the ideals of chivalry were fostered, in which the joust and the tournament perpetuating the form of these ideals bulked far larger than preparations to withstand a siege or to carry war into an enemy camp.

Not many English castles have so much variety of architecture or such a dramatic story as Kenilworth and Ludlow, but in almost all except those which were abandoned early in their history there is enough to give food for much thought, and enough too to fire the imagination to reconstruct the lives of the men who commanded them, their objects, and their achievements.

As we have seen castles were originally either royal or baronial strongpoints or residences. Their secondary functions included service as courts of justice, and as the meeting places for the councils of government, as in the Welsh Marches. They were also military barracks, and above all prisons, whether for the incarceration

of the local people who had dared to defy the baron, or for the housing of foreign prisoners of war, or the safe custody of political prisoners. It is fantastic but true that each of these functions continued to be served by those few which escaped the ravages of time and war and survived into modern times. Windsor continued as a royal residence, Warwick as a baronial mansion, several, such as Buckingham, saw service as county gaols, Shrewsbury as the assembly place of the town council, and at least three—Carlisle, Dover and the Tower of London—as military barracks. Even though one may feel that the soldiers of the Tower are stationed there rather for sentimental than practical reasons, the castles of Dover and Carlisle at least are important garrisons with a definite place in the scheme of modern defence.

The story of the Tower of London is perhaps more illustrative than that of all other castles which have had a continuous history from Norman times to the present day. The genesis of the Tower was a camp, doubtless a rapidly fortified one, which William of Normandy set up just outside the Roman walls which had been repaired by the Anglo-Saxon people to repel Viking invaders. William pitched camp here within a few weeks of winning the battle of Senlac.

Even then London held a very special position in the country as its commercial if not its administrative capital, and its relatively large population was a force to be reckoned with. When the people of London came to terms with William his eventual triumph was assured. From this camp or hastily erected castle William went to Westminster for his coronation. The custom was followed for many centuries when it was the custom for sovereigns to spend a night or more in the palace attached to the Tower before going in procession through the City to their coronation in the abbey of Westminster.

It was not long before the square Norman keep was begun, probably by the same architect who designed Colchester Castle. This castle, the White Tower as we know it, was in the angle of the Roman walls, the foundations of which have come to light during recent excavation in close proximity to the keep.

The castle fulfilled its purpose, both as a deterrent to the people of Anglo-Norman London and as a symbol of the protection

which the Norman forces afforded the merchants and craftsmen of
the growing town. It was not at first known as the White Tower
but simply as the Castle of London. It acquired its traditional
name, which it has kept to the present day, during the reign of
Henry III, when it was whitewashed inside and out. By then the
castle had been extended eastward and palatial buildings in the
late-Norman style, all traces of which have disappeared, had been
erected.

During the thirteenth century the Norman fortress was con-
verted into one of the strongest concentric castles in the kingdom,
when it assumed very much the appearance which it has today.
The White Tower was left standing free of the encircling walls,
surrounded by the extensive area of the inner ward, to which the
only entrance was by a well-defended gatehouse which we know
as the Bloody Tower. Outside this there was a narrow outer ward,
as there is today, and beyond that another strong wall which was
defended by the river and by a broad and deep moat, which was
not drained until the nineteenth century, on the other sides.

The alterations necessary to convert it from a Norman castle
into a highly complex concentric one were not carried out in one
operation. A beginning was made on the strengthening of the
fortifications as early as the reign of Richard I, while the Byward
Tower was not completed until the reign of Richard II late in the
fourteenth century. However, the greater part of the conversion
was carried out during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I,
including the elaborate defences of the main entrance, where, mis-
trusting the effectiveness of the moat which was crossed by a
drawbridge, Edward I had a semi-circular tower (known as the
Lion Tower) constructed to the west and linked with the Middle
Tower by another drawbridge across a wide ditch. Thus a frontal
attack on the main entrance must of necessity include the storming
of three strong towers, the Lion Tower, the Middle Tower, and
the Byward Tower, and the crossing of two formidable moats.
When that had been achieved there were still the walls of the inner
ward, with its thirteen defensive towers to be overcome.

Whereas in the case of most castles the conversion to the style of
the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the end of attempts to
make them stronger, this was not so in the case of London's own

castle. Improvements continued to be made at intervals, partly, no doubt, because from the earliest times English sovereigns recognized that the defence of London was of paramount importance. Moreover the position of London was an exposed one, lying as it did relatively near to the traditional places of invasion along the Kentish coast and equally exposed to attack from invaders sailing up the broad estuary of the Thames.

It is not surprising, therefore, that even as late as the reign of Henry VIII, when the ever-present threat of invasion from Europe became less imminent, two angle bastions were added at the corners of the north wall and afford today an interesting comparison between the military architecture of the Middle Ages and that of Tudor times. There are in addition domestic buildings dating from Tudor times right down to the modern rectangular block of the Waterloo Barracks, which faces the White Tower across the parade ground in strange disharmony. There was one further attempt at more complete fortification during the nineteenth century when a bastion near the centre of the north wall was added at the time of the Chartist riots. But this was destroyed by enemy bombardment during the Second World War, furnishing yet one more fascinating commentary on the relative strength of medieval and modern buildings.

So this one castle includes examples of almost every period of military history from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. It is, as it were, the epitome of castle building of all times, while its history is no less comprehensive, seeing that at one time or another it has served as royal residence, military base, State prison, royal mint, and treasure house. It has also a long history as a place of execution, where two queens of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard, were beheaded, as were also Lady Jane Grey, and Queen Elizabeth's ill-fated favourite Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.
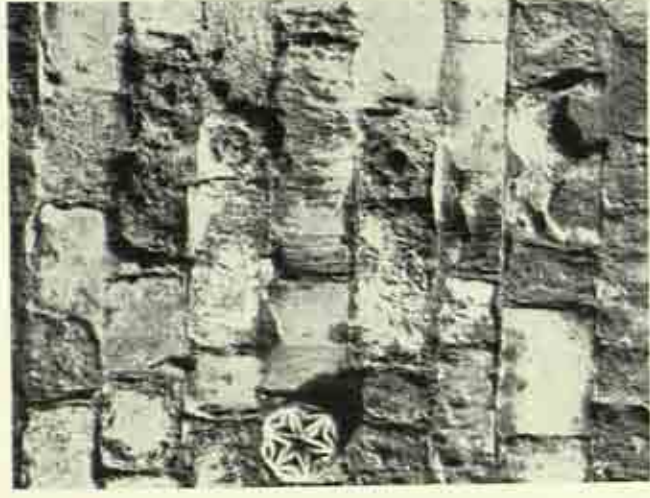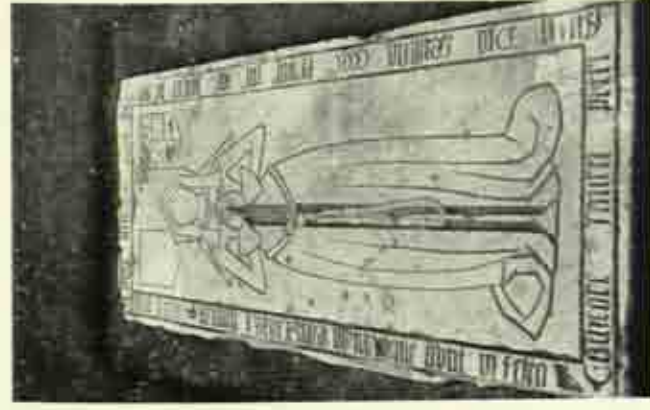
The Forgotten Legacy. Very many parts of the medieval legacy are virtually forgotten or overlooked. The three pictures on this page illustrate some phases of this forgotten legacy. The tomb of a benefactress of Haughmond Abbey (*left*) is perfectly preserved on the grassy slope which was once the church of Haughmond Abbey. The weathered figure (*centre*), probably a figure of Christ, is on the triangular bridge in Crowland, which once allowed townspeople to cross a river to go to service in the abbey church. The bosses and round-headed arches (*right*) are in the wall which surrounds the cathedral close of Salisbury. They are part of the fabric of Old Sarum cathedral which was granted by the Crown for building purposes after the cathedral see had been transferred from Old Sarum to New Sarum (Salisbury)

The Fate of the Medieval Abbeys. The majority of medieval abbeys mouldered away after the dissolution and are now left in fragmentary ruins, though some of these ruins have genuine beauty, as shown by the Norman arch flanked by the sculptures of St. Peter and St. Paul at Haughmond, Shropshire (*left*). Others were granted to favourites of the Sovereign and were transformed into private dwelling-places, the subsequent fate of which has been as various as that of the abbeys. The photograph below shows the tower of the monastic church of Malvern, together with the elaborate house and gate-house which were built from the materials of the monastery and after a chequered history are now serving as an hotel

Abbey and Priory

THE medieval abbeys and priories of England, Wales and southern Scotland constitute one of the most important links still left to us with life in the Middle Ages. They also represent an appreciable part of the medieval heritage of architecture. Though few of the monastic churches, whether in ruins or restored, can compare with some of the greater cathedrals of the old foundation, many have features of unusual interest, each one contributing something to our knowledge of the daily life of the monks, the lay brethren, and the priests who composed the monastic communities of the Middle Ages.

Because the majority of the monastic ruins are relatively unspectacular and often lie far off the beaten track, it is easy to underestimate the number which await the interested explorer. In England and Wales there are well over two hundred sites on which at least something can be seen and well over one hundred on which either the monastic church or the conventual buildings are well worth a visit by the lover of medieval art and architecture as much as by the student of history.

All have a story to tell and something individual to show. It is, in fact, only by visiting as large a number as possible that one can begin to fill in the detail of a picture the general outline of which is well enough known. Many individual monkish orders with their own customs and deviations from the generally accepted pattern are represented, as are the orders of canons and friars, all playing a separate and important part in the development of medieval life and culture.

Some ruins are of monasteries which sheltered only monks, others are of the relatively few but still vitally interesting and important nunneries, while a very few are of monastic establishments which catered both for men and women. Some perpetuate the architectural style and the sculptural ornament of Norman

times, others the styles current in all phases of the Gothic period, right down, in fact, until near the time of their ultimate dissolution during the reign of Henry VIII.

A few examples picked almost at random will demonstrate their variety of interest and their varying fortunes after the dissolution. Essex, for instance, has three priories at Waltham, St. Osyth and Colchester, which all originally belonged to the Augustinian Order of Canons. Colchester Priory is in ruins, but the ruins are of exceptional beauty and interest, and are a magnificent example of the Norman style of building. Waltham priory church by contrast became a parish church after the dissolution and though it retains much Norman workmanship shows also the mixed styles of later periods, while the church of St. Osyth Priory fell into decay, and part of the conventual buildings was built into a private house. So these three priories of the same order in one county give a fair idea of the fate of monastic buildings in general.

In the north country, Yorkshire still has recognizable fragments of no less than twenty-five monastic establishments, while the sites of many others are known, though there may be little or nothing to be seen above ground. Those twenty-five sites include two of the greatest Cistercian foundations of the Middle Ages, Fountains Abbey, the most complete of all monastic ruins, and Rievaulx, one of the most beautiful and most picturesquely set. Several are Benedictine houses, including the lovely ruins of Monk Bretton; they include in Mount Grace the most intriguing link with a medieval charterhouse, and in Selby Abbey a monastic church which has become one of the finest parish churches in the country, as well as the remains of several Augustinian priories, among which the monastic churches have become the parish churches at Bolton and Bridlington.

No other English county has as proud a share of the monastic heritage as Yorkshire. That is partly because none other approaches it in size and partly because in the Middle Ages it was thinly peopled and as yet undeveloped, so that it attracted several of the monastic orders, especially the Cistercian, which made a great name for itself because of the practical help it gave in the agricultural development of land previously considered unsuitable for farming. But almost every county of England and Wales

has at least some ruins or some reconstructed abbey or priory church well worth a visit and careful study.

The ruins of Tintern, set in a horseshoe bend of the river Wye under the wooded slopes of the Forest of Dean, spring to mind; so do the noble ruins of Crowland Abbey in Lincolnshire, dominating the large village which takes its name from the abbey. One remembers too the extensive but little-known ruins of Llanthony Priory in a deep valley of the Black Mountains of Monmouthshire, and the fine series in Shropshire which includes Buildwas, Haughmond, and Much Wenlock. The historic associations of Glastonbury make it especially memorable. That is true equally of the abbeys of Bury St. Edmunds, of Battle, and in Wales of Strata Florida and Valle Crucis.

That is only a beginning of the long list. Nor must it be overlooked that there were priories in association with many of the medieval cathedrals, as at Canterbury and Rochester, Gloucester and Chester, where the monastic ruins, though they are dwarfed by the beauty of the cathedrals, have a very real interest of their own. There is special interest also in some of the abbey churches still in use as parish churches, like the church of the Benedictine nunnery of Romsey, and of the Augustinian priory at Christchurch, or of the Benedictine monastery of Bath, which is today one of the two cathedral churches of the diocese of Bath and Wells. London's own Westminster Abbey was built or, to be more precise, rebuilt, during the reign of Edward the Confessor as the church of a monastic foundation. Though nothing, or practically nothing, of St. Edward's fabric has survived it was still the church of an abbey at the time of the dissolution and was created a Royal Peculiar by Queen Elizabeth only after a colony of monks had been brought back during the preceding reign by Queen Mary in one of her numerous but abortive efforts to set back the ecclesiastical clock.

These examples are enough, surely, to demonstrate the rich variety of material which has been handed down to the present day and the wealth of history (as well as legend) which can be inferred from this part of the medieval legacy. To understand them better it is necessary to grasp the essentials of the history of monasticism, much of which is still shrouded in obscurity, especially in its

earlier phases. Certainly the story spans the whole of the Middle Ages from the fifth century to the sixteenth. It is in no sense exclusively part of the story of later medieval England.

The germ of the idea of the monastic life sprang from the devotion of solitary hermits. The hermit cell dedicated to solitary reflection and the devotions of a single individual is a feature of early Christianity, as it has been of most other religions. Christianity had hardly been established as the official religion of the Roman Empire before warlike peoples began advancing across the relatively civilized countries which had grown up under the powerful aegis of Rome. The Goths and Visigoths, the Huns, and the other peoples who figure in the turbulent history of Europe from the time the Roman Empire began to crumble, were mainly pagan peoples who swept away in many areas all traces of the Christian religion. In outlying parts of the empire, it must be conceded, Christianity had never been very firmly established. Even so, the sack of Rome must have seemed like an evil omen to the peoples who had looked for so long to Rome for support and spiritual enlightenment, however corrupt and incompetent the government may, in fact, have been. It was just the same in Britain. When the Roman legions were withdrawn to defend the frontiers of the empire nearer its centre and the Emperor Honorius rejected the appeal of the British leaders for help, men of goodwill despaired of maintaining the organized Christian Church against the ruthless attack of pagan Angles, Saxons and Jutes.

It is precisely in circumstances such as these, when might is clearly equated with right, when war, or the threat of war, is permanently in men's minds, and the very existence of the religion which had taught peace between men is threatened, that some few despairing people, despairing, that is, of any order emerging from chaos, renounce the world and determine to spend the rest of their lives communing with their God in solitary contemplation. There are authentic records of Christian hermits in the Near East, in Africa, and in many other places. There were probably a number in western Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland, where many Christians migrated from the eastern part of Britain which was threatened most imminently.

It is a relatively short step from the ideal of the solitary hermit to

that of a number of hermits grouped together for moral support and protection. In fact, however, the crystallization of this logical thought was due almost entirely to St. Benedict, the true father of medieval monasticism as we know it, a man of whom all too little is known, but who may be said without exaggeration to have influenced the course of history for a thousand years.

St. Benedict was born about A.D. 480 in Italy. Before he was twenty he had spent three years of his life as a hermit living, so tradition records, in a cave at Subiaco. Already by A.D. 500 a few monastic establishments of little consequence had been founded in Italy, but the result of St. Benedict's contemplation was his acceptance of a divine call to found a series of monasteries regulated by strict and inflexible rules, and dedicated solely to the service of God. Before he died, at the age of about sixty, he had founded twenty such monasteries and had composed the Regula Monacorum (the Monk's Rule), always referred to in later times as the Rule of St. Benedict.

So the Benedictine Order was well and truly established. One of its great strengths was that, according to the intention of its founder, individual houses were bound to each other only by their observance of the rule, otherwise having a great measure of self-government under the aegis of the abbot and prior. In the eyes of many people this autonomy was often abused and led to a relaxation of the stern discipline enjoined on all monks belonging to the order, including the heads of monasteries. The result was that in the later Middle Ages numerous break-away orders were founded in an effort to return to the austerity of monastic life as it was conceived. But the name of St. Benedict was never forgotten and most of the break-away orders were dedicated to a return to the Rule of St. Benedict, of which the most vital parts were the vows which the monks were required to take to observe obedience, poverty and chastity.

Of these three the vow which gave most trouble was that of poverty. It was indeed the growing wealth of a few of the monastic houses and the increasing luxury with which their chief officers surrounded themselves which led to the foundation of new orders and ultimately to the world-wide reaction against the monastic ideal in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

We can think, then, of the early monasteries as communities of devoted men and women dedicated primarily to meditation and prayer which bulked very largely in the curriculum of every monastic order. At the same time the monks, or rather the communities of which they were the most important part, had their obligations, among them the duty to care for travellers, especially pilgrims, and, of course, to carry out the work necessary to sustain their own bodies, both in the fields and in the monastic buildings themselves.

As originally laid down under the Rule of St. Benedict, the lives of the abbot, the prior, and the junior officers were not so very different from those of the monks at large. It was enjoined, for instance, on the abbot that he should sleep in the monks' dormitory and eat with them in the refectory, and take part in all the daily services. But no movement in history has ever stood still. By the fourteenth century, although on the face of it the monastic orders had not greatly changed their character, the heads of the monasteries rarely if ever shared in the arduous life of the brethren. They were often politicians, that is to say, well-known statesmen or great landowners, and it was their obvious wealth which disturbed the public conscience and fostered the impression that the whole movement was decadent. Nevertheless, the rank and file of the monks never grew wealthy. On the contrary, they had no possessions of their own in spite of the fact that many of them contributed endowments when they were admitted.

On the credit side, as time went on, the monasteries established the first regular schools in Britain, as they did in many parts of the Continent. This development started when noblemen began to send their sons into the care of an abbot of a monastery, of which they were often patrons, to be given the rudiments of education, secular as well as religious. By then the monastic orders had gained a great reputation for scholarship and learning and, indeed, many abbots and less exalted members of the convents were scholars in every sense of the term, while the monks were responsible under the guidance of the head of the house for the copying and illumination of many manuscripts which but for their labours would have been lost permanently to the civilized world.

It may seem strange that an abbey or priory should have been

engaged heavily in trade—should be concerned, for instance, as one or two were, with coal-mining or, as a great many of the Benedictine houses were, with fairs and markets, the right to hold which they were granted by the Crown and dues from which proved a valuable source of income. Yet it was not necessarily a bad thing, even though some heads of monasteries were undoubtedly corrupt. In the later Middle Ages, for better or worse, the monastic orders were a power in the land and on the whole a civilizing power. Though it may seem odd that the prior of Christchurch, Canterbury, should be personally responsible for building and operating guest-houses outside the walls of the monastery, it is nevertheless true that someone had to be responsible for housing the tens of thousands of pilgrims who came annually to pay their homage to the shrine of St. Thomas, and there was no one better equipped to do this than the prior of the monastery, nor anyone more likely to be honest in his dealings.

It has been said that the clerical landlords were more oppressive than the majority of laymen. It is certainly true in some cases, but by no means in all, while many of the monastic houses which grew unusually wealthy did so by virtue of the woollen boom of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries rather than by any excessive rent or taxation. The Normans deliberately used the monastic movement as a pacifying influence in Anglo-Saxon England and very effective it proved to be, especially in the towns. In a world in which life was held cheaply by modern standards, and in which there was not the slightest organization for charitable work of any kind, the presence of a community of monks who could and often did help the aged and the infirm was often a great benefit, especially in the early days of the growing towns. Later the monasteries gave employment to many, pioneered new methods of agriculture, and enhanced the economy of many parts of Britain.

The history of the movement is unusually confused in England during the early part of the Middle Ages because of the Celtic influence in keeping Christianity alive in the western and northern part of the British Isles while the kingdoms of Kent, Northumbria and East Anglia were growing to maturity. It is generally assumed that the worship of Christ was dormant, if not dead, in these areas

but it was vigorous enough, as we have already seen, in the far west and especially in Ireland.

It is known that there was a number of monasteries in the north country earlier than the ministries of St. Augustine and St. Paulinus. Probably there were far more than those of which the names are recorded. Inevitably, because the buildings were of wood, no trace of any of them has survived, while the sites of many that are known have been built on again and again, so that any traces of the early settlements have been obliterated. It is always possible, though, that the sites of others may be discovered by aerial photography, as was the site of the palace of King Edwin of Northumbria in the midst of the cornfields near Wooler.

Many of these early monasteries are know to us almost incidentally because of some great work which they produced, or because some famous scholar among their monks is remembered. So almost all that is known positively of the earliest abbey of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, is the existence of the illuminated copy of the gospels bearing the name of the monastery, and one of the greatest artistic achievements of its time. We know Whitby, too, more because of the fame of its first abbess, St. Hilda, than for any other reason, and we know of Iona in the Western Isles of Scotland chiefly because of the missionary zeal of the Irish saint who founded and ruled over it.

Glastonbury is the only place in the south country which is believed to link together the early Celtic monasteries and the later ones based on Italian design and thought. Even here, however, fact is interwoven with the legend of St. Joseph of Arimathea and the actual evidence of a Celtic monastery is not overwhelmingly strong.

After St. Augustine had achieved the official conversion of the people of Kent and St. Paulinus that of the Northumbrians, and when the greater part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom had adopted Christianity, the times were still too troubled and the Christian ideal among the Anglo-Saxon peoples too unformed for any great development in the story of abbeys. It was not until the reign of King Alfred, and more especially after the Treaty of Wedmore, which brought the long period of intermittent fighting between the English and the Norsemen to a temporary stop, that the idea
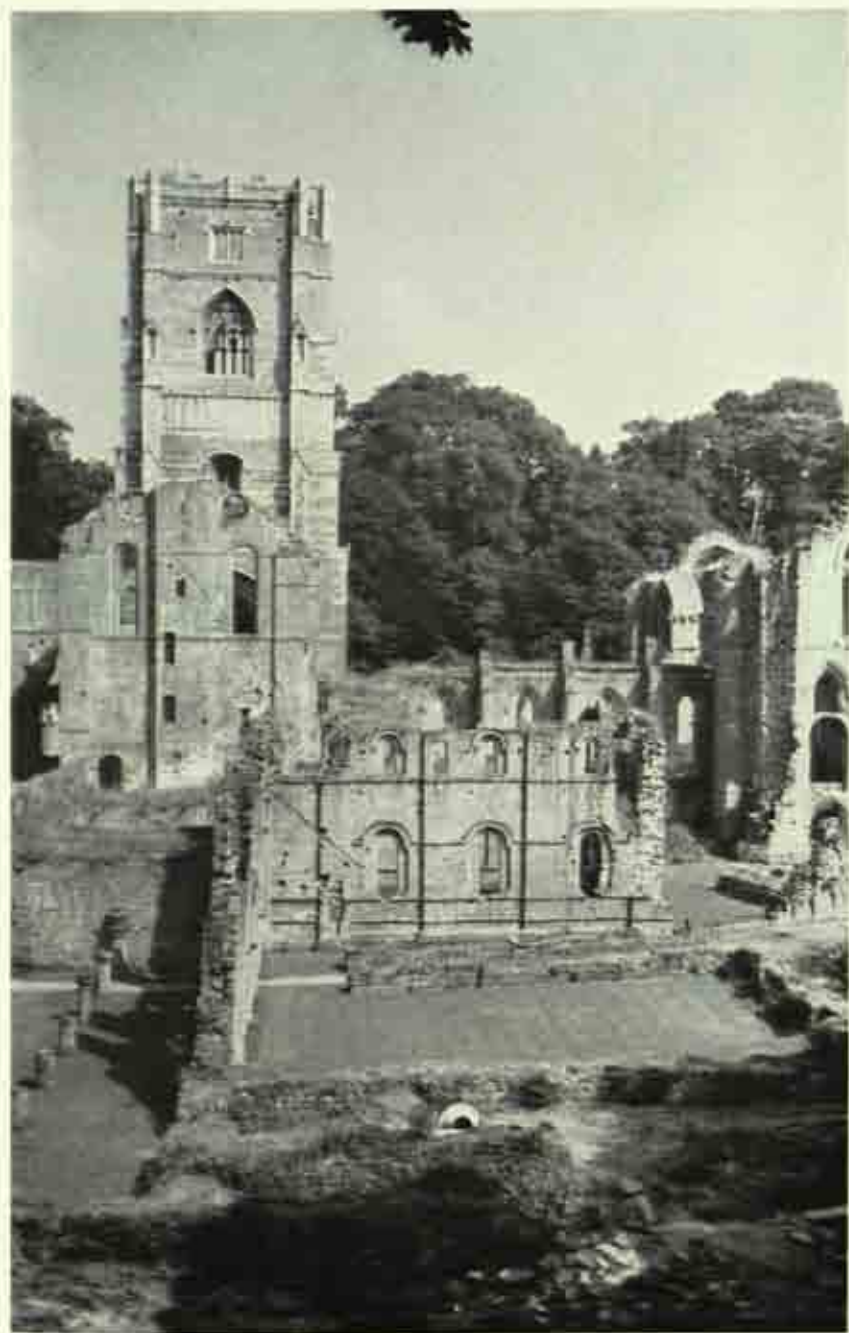
Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire
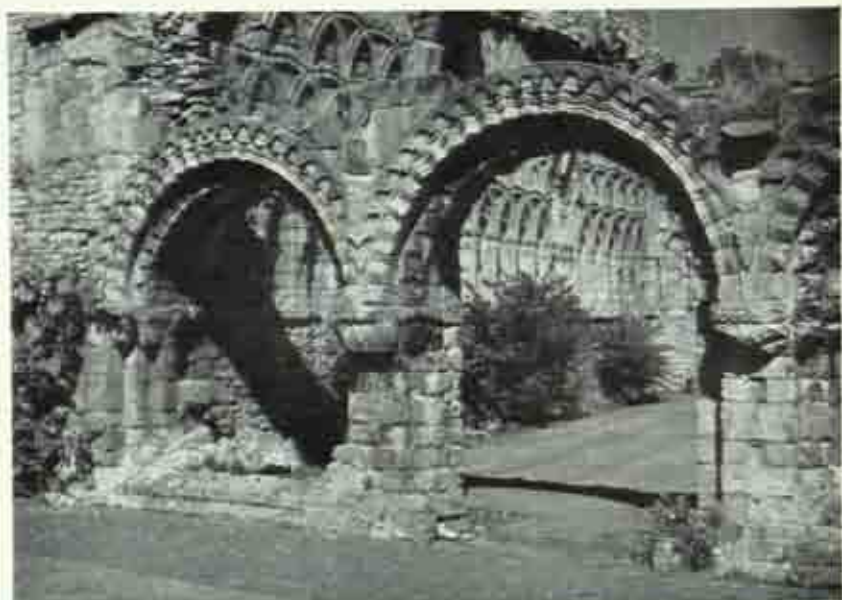
These two photographs show the contrasting beauty of Norman and Gothic workmanship in the elaboration of the medieval abbey and priory. *Above* are the round-headed arches and magnificent arcading of the chapter house of Much Wenlock Priory in Shropshire. *Below*, are two of the surviving Gothic arches of Netley Abbey in Hampshire

Buildwas Abbey. The massive pillars are of the abbey church of Buildwas in Shropshire, built in the latter part of the Norman period. Beyond can be seen fragments of the conventual buildings, also in the Norman style
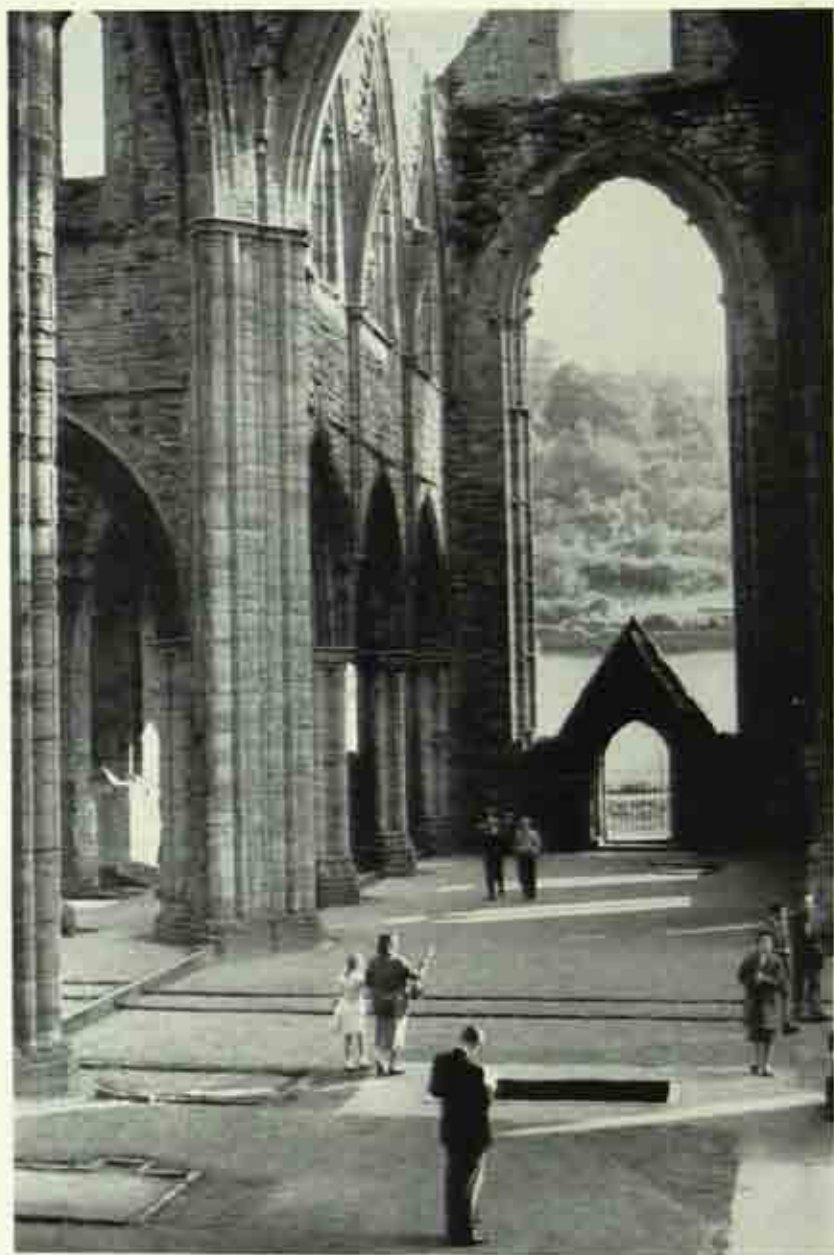
Tintern Abbey. The lofty Gothic arches and window openings of the abbey church of Tintern, beautifully situated by the banks of the Wye, make an arresting contrast with the massive Norman workmanship of Buildwas

of the life of the cloister once more came into its own. By then most of the Celtic monasteries had been attacked at one time or another by the Norse raiders from Scandinavia or Denmark, while many of them had been burnt to the ground and their inmates, nuns as well as monks, murdered with that ruthlessness which characterized the whole history of the Viking invasions of Britain.

So a new start was made in the latter part of King Alfred's reign, and from that time onwards, while many of the Celtic houses were refounded on the same sites and many new ones were built on fresh sites, all were constituted according to the Rule of St. Benedict and all are rightly described as Benedictine houses until the beginning of the break-away movements in the eleventh century.

A most vital clause in the Treaty of Wedmore between King Alfred and the Norsemen (though one which is seldom commented upon) was that the official religion within the Danelaw, that is, the greater part of eastern England, was to be Christianity. It is impossible to imagine that at one stroke of the pen the many hundreds of Norse communities which had settled within this area swept away their pagan gods and substituted Christian churches for their temples. What the treaty did mean, however, was that the Norse leaders, in return for what in effect was the unimpeded tenure of nearly half of the English realm, would tolerate the Christian religion among the Anglo-Saxon peoples who had remained within the territory. So the arrangement had the blessing of the Pope, who had already become the chief single power in Europe, and the refounding of monasteries within the Danelaw with the support of King Alfred and the acquiescence of the Norse leaders was, in effect, a method of permitting the influence of the Roman Church once more to infiltrate into this part of England, thus sowing the seeds for its ultimate reunification with Wessex.

This, then, was one instance in which the monastic movement played a very important part in the unification of the English realm, as it was to do in the time of the Norman kings. Even so, though Norsemen in England had agreed to accept Christianity, the Scandinavian peoples at large continued in the main pagan. When war was renewed between the English and the Danes, especially during the invasion led by King Sweyn in the last decade of the tenth century, many of the refounded monasteries

suffered as grievous a fate as those which had been destroyed during the earlier invasions. However, as history records and internal evidence confirms, Sweyn's son and successor on the throne of England, King Canute, made amends and restored many of the abbeys which had been destroyed during the invasion. He was known throughout the civilized world of Europe as a devout Christian and it was undoubtedly partly through the support of the Church that he was able so successfully to rule not only over England but over Denmark and Norway, though unable, as he had hoped all his life, to found a northern dynasty which would persist after his death.

The abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, of which most impressive remains have survived, including a reconstructed Norman tower of truly noble proportions and a magnificent Gothic gatehouse with portcullis, provides as typical an example of the story of a Benedictine monastery as any. Its foundation is known to be earlier than 900, while there is good evidence for the belief that it dates back to 630 and was founded by Sigebert, King of East Anglia.

At that time, of course, it was not known as Bury St. Edmunds but by its East Anglian name Beodricsworth (the spelling is uncertain). Then—and this is a near-historic certainty—in 903 the mortal remains of St. Edmund, a king of East Anglia who had been murdered by the Danish invaders because he refused to disavow his Christian faith, were brought to the monastery and set up in a shrine in the monastic church which was thenceforward known as St. Edmunds. It was left to King Canute about 1020, with the help and support of the bishops, to re-endow the monastery and transfer it to a number of Benedictine monks from neighbouring abbeys, while it was the patronage and financial support of Canute which probably made possible the rebuilding of the monastic church in stone. This was consecrated in 1032, though the whole building was not completed until 1097, by which time a Norman abbot had been appointed and a fresh colony of monks introduced from Normandy.

From that time onwards St. Edmundsbury Abbey never looked back. It had, after all, the prerequisite of prosperity in the shrine of St. Edmund, to which an ever-increasing number of pilgrims came each year, leaving behind their offerings and incidentally bringing

increased prosperity to the people of the little town which grew up outside the abbey gate and gradually developed into an important market centre. This fact in turn contributed to the wealth of the foundation, since all the land on which it was built was monastic land and all its citizens paid rent to the abbot, as well as perforce paying market dues when the abbey was chartered to hold a market.

Bury, too, had another very useful asset in its royal patronage, for King Canute was only one of many English kings who showed an interest in its wellbeing. During the period of the crusades, the shrine of St. Edmund had a special significance as that of a man of war who had died for the Christian faith. It is not surprising therefore to find that King Richard I visited Bury and gave a substantial offering immediately before his departure for the crusade, and that his example was followed by many other devout men of wealth and nobility. In fact, funds came in so rapidly that before the end of the twelfth century the abbey church had been almost entirely rebuilt as well as enlarged, and the conventual buildings enriched and restyled without thought of cost.

The tragedy of the Black Death paradoxically brought even greater prosperity to Bury. The extensive area of land around it which had been granted for its use by various landowners as bequests or offerings was ideally suited to sheep-raising, on which the later medieval prosperity of Britain as a whole depended, so that Bury shared to the full in the woollen boom. The abbot let out the land in parcels to a number of tenant farmers, charging them appropriate rents and levying taxes on the fleeces which they produced. Although the days of its greatest prosperity had past before the dissolution, its annual income was still between £1,500 and £2,500 a year in the reign of Henry VIII, an extraordinarily large sum for those times, certainly worth at least £100,000 a year and probably much more in terms of our own currency. Yet Bury was by no means the richest of Benedictine foundations. It ranked eighth or ninth at the time of the dissolution, a fact which throws a most revealing light on the very high proportion of the national finances which were controlled by the monastic orders.

In spite of this picture of exuberant and continuing prosperity, the history of the abbey of St. Edmundsbury is by no means

without its more sombre side. It survived innumerable disasters, some arising from causes within, some from without. Happily there is no record of open discord between the monks and their superior officers such as we find in the annals of several other eminent foundations of the Middle Ages, but the architects and master masons who were responsible for the building and subsequent rebuilding of the abbey church and the conventual buildings were no more reliable than they were in other parts of the country. The central tower of the church, for instance, fell in 1210 and did irreparable damage to the fabric, while two hundred years later the western tower also collapsed and in its fall badly damaged the nave. Though the central tower was rebuilt and repairs were made to the nave after the second disaster, the western tower was probably never rebuilt. Fire, a greater bane of medieval buildings than faulty construction, also took its toll, and in 1465 most of the nave, then once again in the process of being rebuilt, was ravaged by fire, the cause of which no one knew.

But that was not all. Conflict arose quite early between the abbot and the burghers of the market town outside the gates. The citizens felt that they were being unfairly treated and that the terms of the leases they held were oppressive, even for those times. In spite of the fact that in the Middle Ages all men were brought up in the Catholic faith and taught to accept it without question, so that every one of them was tempered to the thought of the abbot as a being of supreme authority, feeling ran so high that riots became frequent and threats were made against the person of the abbot and of the monks (who, however innocent they may have been, were associated in the minds of the people with the wrongs which they felt were being inflicted on them).

A crisis was reached in 1327, when a great throng of the townspeople broke through the main gateway of the abbey into the abbot's palace, set fire to the gateway itself and to parts of the conventual buildings, and murdered a number of the monks. This was rebellion on the grand scale, an event which could not possibly have taken place before the Black Death had given the people an opportunity to voice their wrongs. It was the expression of a medieval form of socialism, a revolt directed as much against the established order of things as against the abbot or against God or

the King. The ringleaders, as always, were executed but it is significant that after the uprising the terms of tenancy of the townspeople were modified and many of their real or imagined wrongs were righted. The life of the abbey was interrupted, but no more than that. The buildings which had been damaged by fire were repaired, and a fine new battlemented gatehouse was erected to replace the one destroyed—the selfsame gatehouse which today graces the fine open square of Bury.

After the dissolution almost the whole of the abbey decayed, including the abbey church which was then counted one of the most magnificent in England. King Henry VIII, it is said, had intended that it should become the church of a new diocese. If that is so, the King's plan went sadly astray. Instead the church and the conventual buildings became a quarry from which the people of the town carted away the stone to build new houses and roads. Even today within the former precincts of the abbey one can pick out several houses which are built mainly from stone taken from the abbey buildings. No one cared. The abbey church, or part of it, might have been preserved as a parish church, but the abbots had been so wealthy that they had been able to make provision for the needs of the townspeople and had built at their own expense several parish churches outside the walls of the monastery. These parish churches, one of which has become the cathedral church of the bishopric of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, continued to serve the townspeople after the monastery was dissolved. So no one had any use for the monastic church except to utilize its stone for the most practical and mundane purposes.

If the abbey of St. Edmundsbury provides an excellent example of the varying fortunes and vicissitudes which beset one of the larger of the Benedictine monasteries, Crowland (Croyland) in Lincolnshire is equally illustrative of the history of one of the smaller houses of this order. Crowland like Bury was founded during the Anglo-Saxon period, probably during the eighth century. At that time its site was veritably an island protected by the impenetrable morass of fenland, with only one possible approach to it. Even today, when the Fens have been drained and the whole shape of the landscape is changed, Crowland still gives the impression of being an island raised slightly

above the prevailing level of the now-fertile fields which surround it.

Like Bury, too, Crowland suffered grievously during the period of continued unrest and foreign invasion which spanned the ninth and tenth centuries. The records show that it was virtually destroyed about 870 by bands of Danish or Norse warriors as they marched westward across East Anglia and discovered the secret approach to the abbey, which they could recognize from afar by its extensive timber buildings. There, they thought, is a place worth plundering, and because the Christian religion meant nothing to them they burnt the conventual buildings and church to the ground, put the monks to the sword, and carried away whatever treasure they could find.

Just as at Bury, too, it was King Canute who made possible the reconstruction of the abbey by contributing from the royal coffers sufficient to put the work in hand. Thereafter its history was continuous. The wooden buildings, both of the church and the monks' quarters, were replaced during the latter half of the eleventh century by more elaborate buildings in stone but these were destroyed by fire almost as soon as they were completed and a new beginning was made. The fragments which survive show some of the fabric of this later Norman church, as well as evident signs of several rebuildings and enlargements in the centuries which followed. The abbey was dissolved in the reign of Henry VIII, the actual deed of surrender being signed by the abbot on December 4th, 1539.

So far the history of the two houses, Bury and Crowland, is remarkably similar, but if we look a little more closely into the picture we shall find some very interesting differences. The abbot of Bury was a great landlord and came frequently into conflict with the townspeople. The abbots of Crowland, by contrast, though they too were landlords on a major scale, never came into conflict with the people of the little town which, as at Bury, grew up outside the gates of the monastery. Rather the reverse. All the evidence shows that the people of Crowland looked to the abbot as to a father and protector, in the same way as the people of medieval towns looked to the constable or baron ensconced in his castle as the upholder of their rights.

Crowland was famous for its hospitality. Indeed one of the major functions of the medieval abbey was to entertain the king's representatives, the bishops, and the higher clergy, as well as pilgrims. But the abbots of Crowland seem to have carried this implicit duty to a greater extreme than most and to have opened their guest-houses to any and everyone who had need of a night's lodging in the security of the abbey walls. Yet in spite of this lavish hospitality and in spite of the fact that it was a relatively poorly endowed foundation, Crowland never had need to appeal to the king for financial help. It was, in fact, one of the best organized and best administered of medieval foundations.

Moreover, whereas the abbots of Bury expended part of their surplus income in providing churches for parishioners in their town, the abbots of Crowland, having no comparable resources, threw open the north aisle of the nave of the abbey church, thus forging a link between the monastery and the town which was never broken, a link, incidentally, which is perpetuated, since the north aisle of the nave continued to be used as a parish church after the dissolution and, in fact, is still so used. Though all that is left is this aisle of the nave, together with meagre, if spectacular, ruins of the rest of the church, and slight fragments of the conventual buildings, the modern village has one precious link with the Middle Ages unique in England which illustrates yet one more facet of the relationship between medieval town and abbey.

This is the triangular bridge, capped with a sculptured figure of Christ, erected at the expense of the abbey to make it easier for the townsfolk to visit the abbey church. It spanned two streams of the Welland which met at this point, and which in winter after heavy rains proved a formidable obstacle to the devout. Probably there was a bridge here in Saxon times, but the steeply pitched bridge which stands today (though the streams which it crossed have been diverted) dates from the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century. Probably in the later Middle Ages the bridge was crowned with a cross. Though one may discount the tradition that it was rebuilt at the express wish (or as a gift) of John of Gaunt, who was certainly a visitor towards the end of the fourteenth century, there is no doubt at all that it proved as useful

to the numerous pilgrims to the shrine of St. Guthlac in the abbey church as it was to the parishioners.

The Cistercian was one of the first and certainly the most successful of the break-away orders. It came into existence towards the end of the eleventh century, when a number of monks from the Burgundian monastery of Molesme decided to found a new abbey with a far stricter adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict. They chose a site at Citeaux, from which the order took its name, in the midst of uncultivated woodland.

The newly established order took western Europe by storm. It is evident that many thinking people had already come to the conclusion that the magnificent churches and abundant ornament of the Benedictine Order were inconsistent with the vows of the monks and that the growing wealth and power of the abbots were a rebuke to the whole idea of monasticism. The rules drawn up by the monks of Citeaux were severe, but they were welcomed by many and the order became incredibly popular in a remarkably short space of time.

It had its teething pains but they were only brief. When Stephen Harding, one of the original members of the new monastery, an Englishman from Sherborne, became abbot every difficulty seemed to disappear and it is to Stephen Harding that the vast political and spiritual power of the Cistercian Order is mainly due. By the middle of the twelfth century there were more than three hundred Cistercian monasteries, mainly in France and England. Two hundred years later the number of foundations was more than six hundred. In England alone there were between seventy and eighty. Though the high ideals which were the birthright of the order declined, the Cistercians continued to command respect throughout the later Middle Ages, if only because of the contribution which they made to the development of England and the other countries in which they were established.

Whereas the majority of the Benedictine abbeys were situated in towns, the Cistercians made a point of choosing virgin sites in open and usually uninhabited tracts of countryside. They proved beyond any possibility of doubt that many areas of England, especially the valleys leading into the Yorkshire moors, were capable of producing a living for the devout husbandmen though they had never

The Medieval Village Today. Few villages have survived intact from the Middle Ages, but many retain the spirit of medieval England. Two of these are pictured on this page. Ashmore (*above*), with its numerous thatched cottages is a village in Cranborne Chase on the borders of Dorset. King's Somborne (*below*) is a village with similar characteristics in Hampshire, but here the medieval spirit which would otherwise be fully evident is marred by the numerous advertisements which have been posted on the ancient thatched cottages close by the stream which flows through the village

The Past Lives on in the Present. Stokesay Castle (*above*) is one of the finest examples of the fortified manor-houses which were being built on the borders of Wales when life was becoming more settled but the threat of Welsh incursions had not been entirely removed. The ancient bridge at Atcham, Shropshire (*below*), has been replaced by a modern bridge which can be seen through the arches of the old one, but it has been allowed to survive as a footbridge
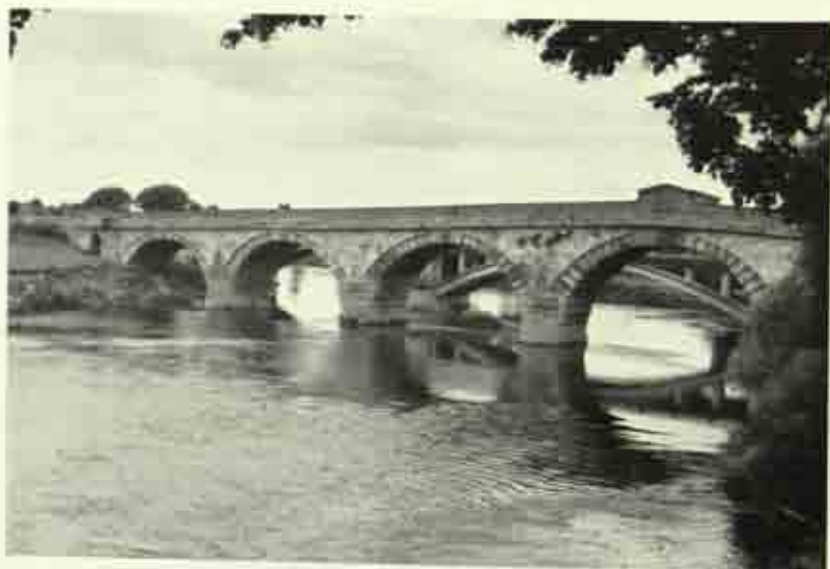
before been cultivated. They showed, too, that a community could live in peace and relative prosperity, dependent solely on their own work and initiative, and without the assistance of the dues and taxes which the Benedictine abbeys in general levied on the towns-people who depended on them for their livelihood.

Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire, quite apart from the beauty of its situation and the architectural elegance of its surviving ruins, has a history which is fairly representative of the story of a Cistercian abbey. It was founded early in the twelfth century, but was completely rebuilt a hundred years later, though some of the masonry of the earliest church was incorporated in the walls of the later one. No great event to affect the even tenor of the monks' life occurred between the rebuilding of the church and the dissolution. There was no sacred shrine to attract pilgrims, no market town grew up at its gates, no particular circumstances gave it any appreciable claim to fame or to wealth, yet for four hundred years it flourished in a modest way. In all that time there was no lack of recruits, while its monks carried out diligently the tasks set them, whether of scholarship or of agriculture. In fact, Tintern represents as well as any other abbey ruin in Britain the unspectacular but always useful work of a Cistercian abbey in the period when the monastic ideal was respected, with every reason.

An equally typical example of the history of the Cistercians is afforded by Buildwas Abbey in Shropshire. This was founded by a minor break-away order, that of Savigny (the Savignac Order) and was founded by monks from Furness, the first foundation in Britain of that order, about 1135, under the patronage of the Bishop of Lichfield. Only twelve years after its foundation this little-known order became part of the growing Cistercian one, so that Buildwas is generally known as a Cistercian house. Subsequently its history was as uneventful as any other of the order, but the beauty of its surviving ruins demonstrates that it prospered and that its revenues were more than adequate to sustain the monks who dwelt in it. It withstood, like most of the monastic houses in the Welsh Marches, several attacks from Welsh insurgents. On one occasion at the beginning of the fifteenth century during the insurrection of Owen Glendower, it suffered a major attack and the extensive farmlands which it controlled were laid waste. Yet

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in spite of such vicissitudes it not only continued to exist but carried out faithfully the work inherent in the spirit of its foundation, drawing additional wealth from the tolls which it was empowered by royal decree to levy on passengers over the near-by bridge across the Severn.

Although the Cistercian became the most powerful as well as having the largest number of houses of all break-away orders, its foundation was only one of several which took place during the eleventh century. At the time the most important appeared to be the Cluniac Order, which took its name from the Benedictine monastery of Cluny, whose abbot, by name Odo, set up what was in effect a reformed Benedictine monastery dedicated like the Cistercian to the stricter observance of the Rule of St. Benedict.

Abbot Odo was an idealist. There can be no doubt about that. But the order which he established proved in practice to be the means by which his own abbey, that of Cluny, was aggrandized beyond all expectation. Looking back across the centuries, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this great abbot must have foreseen the results of his initiative. It is equally difficult to avoid the conclusion that he was, as we should say in modern parlance, cashing in on the resentment which was felt against the growing luxury and, in terms of building, the growing ornament of Benedictine houses in general. That may, however, be unfair. The fact remains that when the Cluniac Order was founded it was laid down that all monastic houses founded within the order should be dependent upon the mother house of Cluny and should donate part of their revenues to it. In fact, the Cluniac Order became very popular and attracted both in Normandy and in England many wealthy patrons who gave rich endowments for the foundation of new houses. But a part at least of all these endowments found their way into the strong-room of Cluny, so that this relatively poor monastery became the richest in Europe and its abbots ultimately became some of Europe's most powerful churchmen.

This fact is also the reason why in England and elsewhere the Cluniac Order never became as popular as the Cistercian. However, for a time it was successful enough to make its mark and, though relatively few abbeys were founded under its aegis, those which were founded continued in the main active, if not particu-

larly prosperous, until the dissolution. Much Wenlock Priory in Shropshire provides a typical example. There were in all three separate foundations on the site of the priory, which is one of the most interesting in England not only in its history but in the splendour of its ruins.

According to tradition it was established originally and endowed in the seventh century by a King of Mercia as a nunnery for his daughters, and founded according to the Rule of St. Benedict. His daughter, Milburge, the first abbess, was canonized after her death and her name, St. Milburge, has been associated ever since with the site. The history of the nunnery was uneventful for about 150 years. At least, nothing is recorded of its story. But in the ninth century, like so many others, it was utterly destroyed by Viking invaders. Its buildings were burnt to the ground, and so far as is known its colony of nuns was slaughtered or carried away captive by the raiders.

Recent excavation has thrown a little dim light on this earliest foundation by uncovering the foundations of a church almost certainly of wood, the dimensions of which were less than 40 feet by 30 feet. Thereafter the site was left deserted until the middle of the eleventh century. Then, it appears, a small church possibly with a monastery attached was endowed by the Earl of Mercia with the encouragement of and perhaps the financial support of Edward the Confessor. This new church may have been of stone, but on that point no one can be dogmatic. It remained for Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, one of the most powerful of the Norman barons introduced by William I to hold the border counties in check, to re-endow this sacred site and establish a monastery, which quickly became wealthy, powerful and famous.

Roger de Montgomery, like so many of the Normans, was a man of war and is remembered in the Marcher country principally on account of the ruthless attacks which he carried out on the Welsh and the relentless savagery with which he made reprisals on the peaceful farming people of Wales for any attack on the Anglo-Norman dominions. At the same time, he was a man of God, again like most of the Anglo-Norman knights, and from his own wealth, partly no doubt derived from the taxation which he levied on the Anglo-Saxons and the neighbouring Welsh alike, he endowed not

only Much Wenlock Priory but the Abbey of Shrewsbury. Much
Wenlock he gave to the Cluniac Order and from his foundation
there arose a church and a convent which in the grace of
their architecture and the size of their revenues equalled any in
Shropshire.

Inevitably the new priory was dedicated to St. Milburge and a
shrine was set up in her memory which attracted many pilgrims,
though it has always remained doubtful whether her actual mortal
remains were buried in the priory church. The magnificent arcad-
ing of the chapter-house gives some idea of the care and artistry
with which the Norman buildings were constructed, but most of
the surviving ruins date from a still more elaborate rebuilding in
the thirteenth century. Though relatively little remains of the con-
ventual buildings, parts of which were used in the building of a
private residence after the dissolution, there is enough to give a
clear idea of the general layout and of the fine workmanship
which went into their construction.

Another break-away order which achieved fame, if not popu-
larity, was the Carthusian. The monasteries founded by it were
known as charterhouses. The Carthusian Order was dedicated to
an even more severe and strict return to first principles than the
Cluniac or the Cistercian. It was dedicated, in fact, to the idea of
the anchorite, the solitary hermit, and interpreted the Rule of St.
Benedict in terms of solitary hermits gathered together into a com-
munity. In houses sponsored by this order individual monks lived
and worked in their own cells, cultivating their own small gardens,
eating and praying alone, and only communing with their fellows
at certain services and on certain feast days. Communal cooking
was allowed but elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that
those who served the monks' food could not communicate with
them. Their cells had revolving hatches so that a meal could be
placed on a ledge on the outside of the hatch, which was then
turned and the monk could take the food without even seeing the
servant who brought it.

Mount Grace in Yorkshire is the most illustrative of the ruined
charterhouses, because there it is possible to trace in outline the
foundations of the individual cells in which the monks lived. The
amazing thing is not so much that the order never became popular,

in the way in which the Cluniac or Cistercian did, but that sufficient recruits were obtained to fill not only the monastery of Mount Grace but several others in England and a number in Normandy. The order took its name from La Chartreuse, where the first house was founded by St. Bruno in 1084.

The Carthusian Order was not merely a sign of reaction against the extravagance of Benedictine houses in the eleventh century. It represented a genuine revival of interest in the anchorite ideal. It persisted right up to the dissolution, and for more than four hundred years had its devotees who never departed in the slightest, so far as we can tell, from their vows or from the ideals which had led St. Bruno to found the order. At the dissolution there were still in England a considerable number of Carthusian monks, while the heads of the charterhouses showed little of the complaisance which characterized the heads of some other monastic houses when they were called upon to sign away their convents on the order of the commissioners of Henry VIII. It is typical of the order and of the idealism which continued to inspire its members that a number chose martyrdom rather than the easy alternative of acquiescence.

The monkish orders tend to overshadow all other religious organization because they were so much more numerous. Some members of the monastic orders, of course, were ordained but in general monks were unordained. There were, however, almost as many orders of canons, that is of ordained priests, as there were of monks. Though the canons regular, as they were called, lived in communities remarkably similar to those of the monks, they followed a very different régime. Because they were ordained they were free to undertake any service which required a priest. They were not confined to the cloister and frequently undertook the duty of looking after a parish in the vicinity of the community in which they lived. In a sense the canonical orders with their ideals of service to the community looked forward to the orders of preaching friars.

Most of the communities of canons lived together bound by their vows to observe the order of St. Augustine. These were known as Augustinian Canons, or, because they wore black vestments, as Black Canons. The first priory of Augustinians was

founded within fifty years of the Norman Conquest. In all there were more than two hundred, and more than a hundred and fifty were still in existence at the time of the dissolution. All were signed away to the commissioners of King Henry VIII, but one at least of the churches of Augustinian communities, that of Carlisle, became a cathedral. Although in general these and other canonical orders did not dispose of as much wealth as the Benedictines or Cistercians, their endowments were sufficient to allow them to build handsome churches and adequate conventual buildings.

Just as the Augustinian Canons were known as Black Canons because of the colour of their vestments, so the Premonstratensian Order came to be known as White Canons because the vestments which they wore were white. In a sense the White Canons were related to the Black Canons in the same way as the Cistercians were related to the Benedictines. They modelled their life and the constitution of their priories according to the edicts of St. Augustine but in detail followed the Rule of the Cistercians. They took their name from the place in Normandy at which the first priory was founded, Premontré. In England they never attained the popularity of many other orders, the total number of their houses not exceeding thirty, of which Welbeck was the largest and ultimately became the mother house.

Torre Abbey in Devonshire is an excellent example of a priory of this order. It was St. Norbert, a German priest, who founded the order in 1121, and it was in Germany and Austria that it became influential. So it was natural when a son of Ralph de Briwer was held as a hostage for the ransom of Richard I after the Third Crusade, that Ralph should approach the Premonstratensian Order to intercede for the return of his son. The order was successful in negotiating this delicate mission and in gratitude Torre Abbey was founded by the de Briwer family. The first abbot was confirmed in office in 1196, coming from Welbeck with six canons. The priory survived for over three hundred years and the last abbot, after signing away the monastery to the commissioners of Henry VIII, became vicar of a neighbouring parish.

The Gilbertine was another canonical order which deserves mention if only because it was founded by an Englishman, a rector of Sempringham in Lincolnshire, later canonized and known as St.

Gilbert. This was an order open equally to men and women. In practice its monasteries contained more women than men, the canons ministering to the nuns. Malton Priory in Yorkshire, of which the nave is still in use as a parish church, was a Gilbertine foundation, and is the only one of which substantial fragments remain. But at the time of the dissolution there were at least twenty-six, and even during the life of St. Gilbert thirteen were founded which sheltered about 1,500 nuns and half as many canons.

Needless to say, the regulations of the order prohibited any intermingling of the sexes, and even in the church there was a wall dividing the part to be occupied by the nuns from that which was for the use of the canons. All could hear the mass being said and the other services being read, but the nuns could not see the canons, while the nuns' cloister was on the opposite side of the church to that of the canons.

Little need be said of the two military orders, the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar. The former came into existence as an order dedicated to giving assistance to pilgrims to the Holy Land. It was, in fact, an offshoot of the Augustinian Order but quickly lost its influence because of its determination to engage in trade, and especially in money-lending, as in London, where the order assumed the place in financial matters which was later taken by the Lombards. The Round Church of the Temple, recently restored, is a monument to the Knights Templar, all of whose churches were built in this form, following that of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Their wealth, and the suspicion that they used their wealth for immoral purposes, led to their suppression by the Pope in 1309, and most of their possessions were handed on to the newly formed Order of Knights Hospitaller, who incidentally inherited London's Temple and the surrounding land on which the Inner and Middle Temples have been built.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century a new need became apparent in Britain, as in most continental countries. That need arose from a lack of any order which might help in shedding a new light on religion to accord with the increasing number of relatively enlightened people who were educated in however

rudimentary a fashion. It was met by the establishment of the orders of friars, orders which inevitably achieved enormous popularity in western Europe because they represented a new trend in religion and presented a fresh vision to the common people of what religion meant.

The orders of preaching friars were monastic in the sense that their members lived together in communities following one or another of the saintly rules, but they differed from all which had been founded before them in that the members of the orders were dedicated to spreading the gospel far and wide, to leaving the monastic cloister whenever occasion might offer in order to give wider publicity to the word of God and to the gospels as they understood them. It is no accident that in the heyday of the preaching friars the windows of churches became larger until in the fifteenth century the nave of a newly built parish church was a perfect hall for preaching, airy and light, high, 'more glass than wall', yet plain and unadorned by comparison with the highly decorated phase of Gothic building which preceded it.

The friars exerted a nation-wide influence and one which reflected the spirit of the times. That they were popular was no more than an added indication that their preaching was timely and that their refusal to accept religion in the fullest sense as the prerogative of the priests was in accordance with the temper of the people.

There were several orders which, like the orders of canons regular, became known by the colour of their vestments, as White Friars, Grey Friars, or Black Friars. The Black Friars were more accurately referred to as the Dominican Order, the Grey Friars as the Franciscan, and the White Friars as the Carmelite. There was also an order known as Austin Friars, though they were less widely established in England than the other three orders.

All were of continental origin, but all were firmly established in England before the middle of the thirteenth century and continued to do useful work, generally with the encouragement of the bishops, until the dissolution. They possessed literally nothing and spent nothing on themselves except for the bare necessities of living. When they were granted land or buildings, as at Canterbury, they elected to have their property held in trust for them by the

burghers, thus clearly linking themselves with the secular side of life while freeing themselves from the responsibilities and the temptations which beset the monastic orders in general. The message which they sought to give to those with whom they came into contact was that godliness could be achieved by the ordinary man in the street merely by following a Christian way of life. They taught that piety was not merely a matter of saving one's own soul by prayer or meditation but consisted rather in helping others to live a good life supported by their faith, and in working always towards the alleviation of suffering.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the orders of friars, quite apart from the immense contribution which they made to medieval learning and the enthusiastic zeal with which they built up some of the finest libraries in the world, became known far and wide for their work in tending the sick, in educating the poorest classes in medieval cities, and in helping to stamp out the organized vice which was as much a part of medieval life as it is of modern life. Though the life of the friars was not, strictly, a monastic one, their influence was probably instrumental in prolonging the life of the monasteries for at least a hundred years. At a time when nobles and commoners alike were offended by the sumptuous life of abbots and priors, they set an example of humility and poverty and service which all could appreciate.

There is much confusion in the definition of abbey, priory and friary. The definition of a friary is, of course, clear-cut. It was simply the home and church of a branch of one of the orders of friars. But no such clear-cut definition is possible of an abbey or a priory. An abbey, in fact, was a convent of which the chief officer was an abbot, or abbess in the case of nunneries, assisted by a prior. A priory was a convent of which the chief officer was a prior, whose assistant was known as sub-prior. In some orders, such as the Benedictine and Cistercian, some monasteries were governed by an abbot and some by a prior and, therefore, some are properly described as abbeys, others as priories, the latter usually being daughter houses founded by a colony of monks from another house, but all the Benedictine houses, such as that of Canterbury, which were attached to cathedrals were priories. Again, all Cluniac houses in England, such as Much Wenlock, were

governed by a prior and therefore are properly known as priories.

The houses established by the canonical orders, the Augustinian, the Premonstratensian, and the Gilbertine, were also priories. That is true irrespective of the name by which they are traditionally known. The Augustinian house at Bolton by the banks of the river Wharfe in Yorkshire, for instance, even though the village to which it has given its name is known as Bolton Abbey, was a priory. Similarly Lacock, a nunnery of the Augustinian Order, was a priory despite the fact that the mansion which was built from its fabric after the dissolution has always been known as Lacock Abbey.

There are several other examples of this tendency, as it were, to promote a monastic house after the dissolution, but the general rules which have been given hold good throughout the country. Thus Lanercost, where the monastic church is still in use as a parish church, was a priory of the Augustinian Order, even though many people refer to it today as Lanercost Abbey. So was Dunstable, where also the nave of the monastic church is still in use, and Waltham in Essex, where again, by coincidence, the nave of the monastic church is the parish church of today, with certain later additions, even though the medieval market town and modern village which has grown around it is universally known as Waltham Abbey.

Life in the abbey and priory centred round the cloister and can be reconstructed very largely from the ruins of the conventual buildings of many abbeys and priories. Few abbey ruins are as revealing as those of Fountains in Yorkshire, which has been quoted again and again as a typical example of a medieval foundation. But there are literally hundreds of other abbey and priory ruins from which the layout of the conventual buildings can be deduced and the life of the inmates inferred. At Wenlock Priory, for instance, where the remains at first glance appear scanty, it is possible to reconstruct a large part of the priory buildings. Here, as in almost every other monastic site, the nave of the church was on the north side of the cloister. There are exceptions to this rule, as at Haughmond, where the lie of the land did not permit of the usual arrangements of the buildings, but in general the church lay

to the north of the cloister, probably because its fabric gave protection from the cold north and north-east winds, which must have militated against active life in the cloister, when there were no windows and no artificial means of heating.

At Wenlock the chapter-house, one of the most important buildings in the monastery, adjoined the south transept of the church, while beyond it was the dormitory range, together with the farmery hall (infirmary) and the farmery chapel. The monks' frater was on the south side of the cloister garth, and most of the other buildings were on the west side. The prior's personal establishment, as in the majority of priories, was quite separate from those of the brethren, even though under the Rule of St. Benedict the head of the abbey was required to live with the brethren and embrace in every particular their way of life.

At Fountains the plan of the buildings was similar. Here, as at Wenlock, the abbey church was on the north side of the cloister, but as in most Cistercian monasteries, what we know as the nave of a church was the choir of the lay brethren, the conversi as they were known in the Middle Ages, a considerable body of men whose chief function was to work in the fields and in the conventual buildings. They were men who had taken the vows of the order but because of their illiteracy were not suitable for inclusion in the community of monks. In return for their board and lodging and the protection which they received they were content to work out their lives in the service of the monastery. The number of lay brethren often exceeded that of regular monks but after the Black Death, when agricultural workers achieved increasing independence and conversi were difficult to obtain, the practice arose of the abbots or priors of monasteries employing labour in the open market.

Fountains Abbey is remarkable because it retains the foundations and indeed fragments of the superstructure of almost all the buildings which formed part of a medieval monastery. To the south of the cloister, that is, opposite the church, there are the refectory or frater of the monks, the kitchen, and warming-room, where the monks were permitted to spend a few minutes before going into the frater for meals and the only part of the monastery which in the first centuries of its existence was warmed. On the

west of the cloister and projecting beyond it were the cellars, and above them the dormitory of the lay brethren. To the east of the cloister, as always, was the chapter-house, and, projecting beyond the end of the cloister, the monks' dormitory. In addition, in this most elaborate of monasteries there was an infirmary hall, infirmary kitchen, and chapel, a separate lodging for the abbot, and a guest-house well away from the main monastic buildings.

The church, however, remained the most important part of the monastery, the part on which money was lavished without stint. It was rebuilt or enlarged again and again to conform with changing fashions and architecture, and to reflect the vast power of the abbot and the increasing revenues which he commanded. The cloister was not only the geographical centre but the social centre of the monastery. Here the monks met to talk and work and meditate. In some monastic cloisters, as at Gloucester, there are traces of the carrels or stone desks at which the monks worked.

To people of today the monastic life may seem a monotonous one, concerned as it was mainly with services, the first of which was at midnight and lasted for two hours. But the fact remains that these communities were of dedicated people and carried on the tradition of scholarship from early-Norman days until the dissolution. The work of the monks was partly scholastic, in the sense that it consisted of copying old manuscripts and illuminating them. But some of the officers of the monasteries were concerned rather with the development of agriculture and in this respect showed initiative, often greater than that of the knights and barons to whom most of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom was granted. The Cistercian Order, in particular, did great work for the country in developing uninhabited areas and in producing wealth from land which had never been cultivated, whether by ploughing it or by transforming it into vast sheep pastures, while the Benedictine Order did almost equal service to the country in fostering the growth of internal trade and in watching over the conduct of markets and fairs.

The abbot and the prior or, as the case might be, the prior and sub-prior, were assisted by numerous lesser dignitaries, who had the responsibility of administering funds set aside for the purpose with which their office was concerned. That many of them may

have been corrupt is not questioned, but the majority, however inexperienced they may have been, carried out their duties to the best of their ability, and the country in general was enriched by their efforts as well as the abbey or priory to which they were attached.

The lay brethren of Cistercian and indeed of other orders, were undoubtedly a great help in achieving these aims, but when lay brethren were no longer available all the evidence suggests that the best possible use was made of hired labour and that the employment given by the abbeys and priories was on terms equal or superior to that offered by lay employers. In fact the monastic orders constituted an important part of the driving force which encouraged the development of medieval England, as of Normandy, and continued to perform their essential functions right up to the time of the dissolution.

It is often said that the monks built their own conventual buildings. More careful research shows that this was true only in the earliest stages of the movement. It may well have been the case in the eleventh century, when a party of monks was often despatched by the mother house to found a new monastery in a deserted part of the country. They may even have raised with their own hands a first church and buildings for their own use, just as the latter-day Benedictine monks of Buckfast built their own abbey on the model of a medieval foundation. In general, however, when the time came for a timber church and monastery to be rebuilt in stone the abbot engaged a master mason or, as we should call him, an architect, together with an itinerant band of masons. Individual monks may have helped with the work. Some may have supervised it, but the bulk of it was done by specialists and it is only a pleasant fantasy to suppose that the members of medieval monkish orders actually carried out the building of the more elaborate churches and monastic buildings.

This is especially true of the later rebuildings and embellishments, which were undertaken when the revenues of an abbey or priory became larger or when special endowments were made, either by will or deed of gift, by patrons. There was intense rivalry between one monastery and another as regards the magnificence of their churches, and to a lesser extent the opulence and size of

their conventual buildings. No doubt also there was competition for the service of the most able master masons, sculptors and wood-carvers. In fact the medieval abbey or priory, whether in town or country, was a community the overt aim of which was dedication to the service of God but which in all practical respects was a close-knit commercial corporation like any other of the times.

Life in Town and Country

A GREAT deal of the daily routine of those who lived in towns and in the country is implicit in the previous chapters. The castle, the abbey—and later the manor-house—were the focal points of life for the vast majority of people from the eleventh century until the population of the towns began to increase with the ever-broadening basis of trade and commerce. This chapter, therefore, is a summary only of some of the salient features of national life in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with special reference to the growing towns.

As regards the country, there is extraordinarily little to be added. The villein and the cotter were for long tied to the land, though by increasingly tenuous chains. Housing continued to be by any modern standard deficient. The lord of the manor was comfortable, though only relatively so, but the worker on the land was lucky if he had adequate protection against the wind and the rain. And this unhappy situation persisted for hundreds of years, almost until Tudor times.

Life was extremely narrow. People were born and worked and died in a single parish, and rarely moved out of it. Their whole life, so long as the feudal system persisted, was bound up with cultivating their small plot of land and giving service to the lord by cultivating his larger area of farming land. It was rare indeed for one of the ordinary people to escape from the bondage of the system. Not one of the working people could read or write. No one expected it of them. They may have been happy according to their temperament, but their life was simple in every sense of the term and even the developing economic trends of the country as a whole did not affect them. It did not even make very much difference whether the people were serfs or freemen. They were equally tied to the land, and bound to spend the whole span of their life in working for someone in authority over them. Very little change took place between the tenth and the fourteenth

centuries. Perhaps the Saxon thane with his more willing and more closely integrated assistants provided happier working conditions than his successors under Anglo-Norman rule, but it made little difference.

Undoubtedly the Black Death, tragedy though it was, did more than any other event to free the country worker and represented the greatest single contribution to the emancipation of the English people. The feudal system was becoming increasingly fragile before the Black Death. The idea of millions of people tied to the land had troubled a few legislators long before then. But tradition dies hard and until the labour force of England was reduced by almost half as a result of the Black Death, the baron and the knight, in brief the landowners, were prepared to insist on their rights. After the Black Death, when labour had to be cajoled rather than commanded, things were very different. The feudal system collapsed, the labourer came into his own, whether he was a descendant of one of the lower orders of the feudal system or whether, as was so often the case, he was a descendant of paid-off soldiers who had fought in the crusades. His standard of living was raised, and though it was still uncommon for people to journey far from their own parish most could feel self-respect and were assured of a better living. The era of the hired labourer had begun.

Never had England been more prosperous than it was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when villages became towns almost overnight, when the unmarried daughters of every farmer spent their time spinning and because of this were known as spinsters, and when every small town in East Anglia, the south and the west country, in fact everywhere where sheep could be reared, became a manufacturing centre with its weaving shops and merchants' houses. It was a great time of economic growth, perhaps one which in relation to its times has never been equalled.

All through the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the market towns had been developing. During this period, town life became much more akin to what it was until the Industrial Revolution, though it is important to bear in mind that most medieval towns were small in area and that townsfolk were also cultivators responsible for tending the fields just outside the urban

The Medieval Town. The medieval town has lived on to a much greater extent than the medieval village. The poultry cross at Salisbury (*right*) presented by a Bishop of Salisbury to the townspeople, is still used for its original purpose as a shelter for stall-holders on market days. The ancient walls of Southampton (*below*), dating from Norman times and frequently strengthened, are a reminder of the age when the sea lapped against them, though today a vast area of the foreshore has been reclaimed and they stand nearly half a mile from the sea
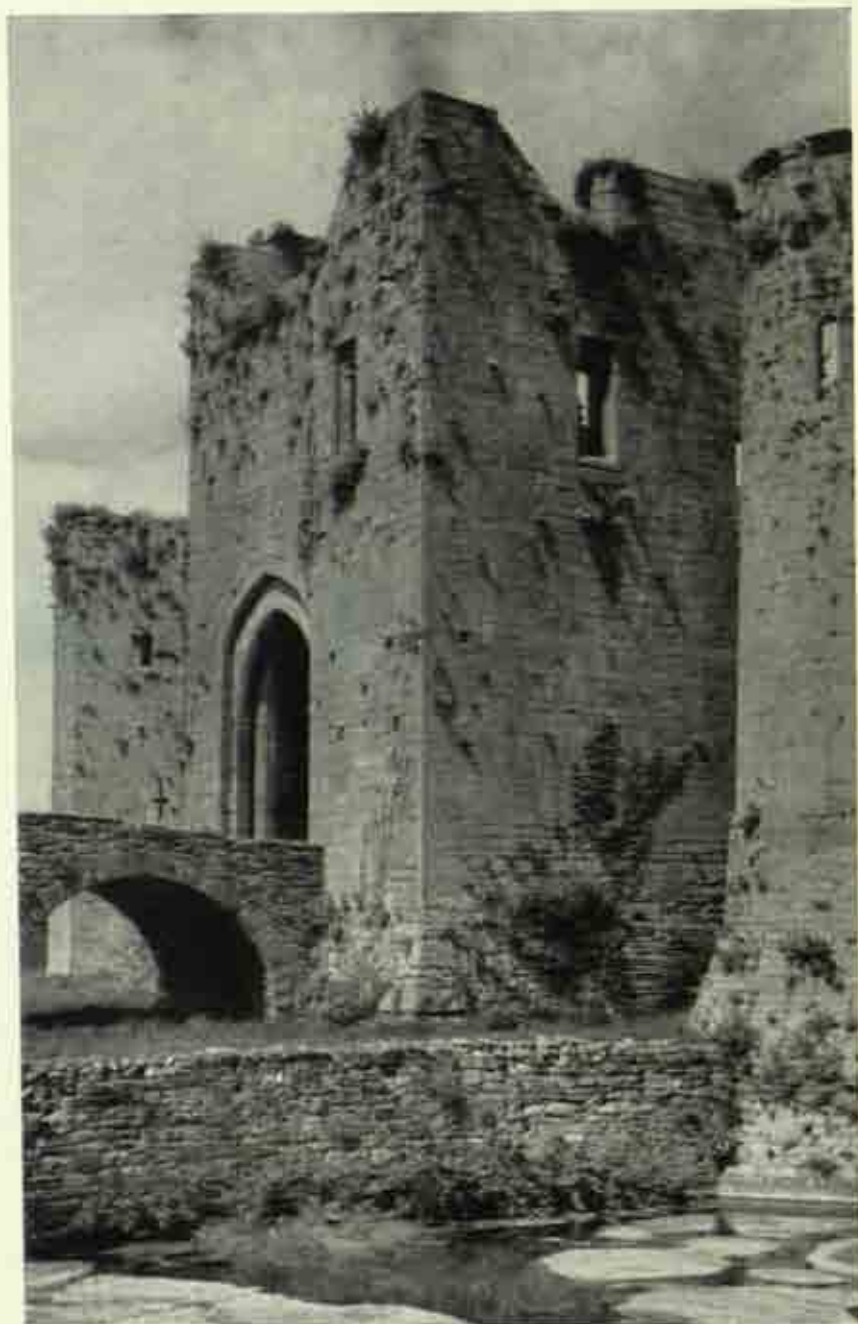
The Great Gatehouse of Raglan Castle

limits. That is a tradition handed down to the present in the form of the vegetable garden and the allotment.

The factor necessary for the growth of most towns was the establishment of a fair or market. There was little difference between the two except that a fair was an annual occasion whereas a market was generally a weekly event, and whereas markets were held near the centre of towns, fairs were commonly on special sites outside the towns. The great fairs of England attracted buyers from far and wide. The markets in general only attracted people from the immediate neighbourhood. Yet the two, the fair and the market, were remarkably similar in their purpose. The abbots of monasteries and the constables of castles purchased wholesale at the fairs, while the local people purchased for their immediate needs at the market. In either case safe access was essential. In both cases the tolls levied added greatly to the revenue of the king or of abbot or baron to whom the levying of dues had been granted.

It is as true to say that the medieval town grew up round the market as to say that the existence of a town brought the market into being. We have already seen how Bury St. Edmunds grew up round the monastery of St. Edmundsbury. That is a very typical instance and one duplicated in almost every place which was protected either by a powerful castle or an abbey. The abbey or the castle in those cases did double service, not only as the *fons et origo* of the market but as representing the military or spiritual authority which could command safe access to it. The townspeople perforce were compelled to bow the knee to the abbot, or to the lord of the manor, but generally they did so with good grace, as otherwise they could not have counted on security.

Stourbridge, St. Bartholomew's held in the open space of Smithfield, St. Ives, Winchester, Stratford-on-Avon—those were the most important medieval fairs. Almost every town, however, that could be called a town (almost every community which numbered a thousand inhabitants) had its market in the fifteenth century to which the farmers of the surrounding countryside came with their wares and offered them in competition with their fellows.

Many of these markets date from Saxon days. Others were introduced during the Anglo-Norman period, and subsequently in

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ever-increasing numbers. We know the oldest of them, the Anglo-Saxon ones, only by the names which have survived, especially by the prefix 'chipping', as in Chipping Wycombe, Chipping Sodbury, and Chipping Norton, all names which presuppose a market in Anglo-Saxon times. Later the market became commonplace and no special prefix was necessary to distinguish a market town from any other. One can nevertheless distinguish many of the medieval market towns by their crosses, the forerunners of the market houses of the present day.

Originally many markets were held in the nave of the church and Sunday was the most popular market day. This may seem sacrilegious to us in the twentieth century but it seemed a perfectly normal thing in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. By tradition the chancel belonged to the priests, the nave to the people. The nave of the church was the people's meeting place. What more natural place, then, to hold a market than the nave of the church. Several archbishops expressed their disapproval of this venue for trading, but they must have felt nonplussed when cathedrals like Ely continued to hold markets in the nave right down to the Reformation.

It was a matter not only of removing the market from the nave of the church but of changing the day from Sunday to a week-day. There was real hardship in asking people to come to town on two days a week when there were no roads and no easy method of transport and work to be done in the fields. On Sunday everybody was free to come into town. Many laws were passed against Sunday markets and against markets held in the nave of the church, but right down to the sixteenth century the laws were flouted in many places. Sardonically this was true of some markets, as at Battle, held under the direct authority of an abbey or priory. However, due to increasing prejudice against the practice, the market was gradually drawn away from the nave of the church.

The first stage in the progress was the building of elaborate porches, as at Cirencester. The market might be held in the lower storey of the porch, while the upper storey might be given over to the meeting of the local guilds. Alternatively, in many cases the market might be held in the churchyard, where stalls were set up and trading took place very much as in the modern street market.

It was not only a matter of convenience. Everyone felt that a market must be held under the protection of God, to ensure fair trading and spiritual protection.

Accordingly the next stage was represented by the building of market crosses, which by their nature gave the protection of the church while allowing the market to be held away from the church precincts. In many cases bishops or abbots presented market crosses to the people of the growing towns. The Poultry Cross at Salisbury and the market cross at Chichester are two excellent examples. Both were provided from funds of the bishops for the use of the towns, both elaborate structures which carried with them the protection of the church, even though they were at considerable distances from the cathedrals concerned. Another, though rather later, example of the elaboration of these crosses is the singularly beautiful Gothic structure at Malmesbury.

It is interesting to recall that the market cross at Salisbury is still used for the purpose for which it was originally constructed. Farmers and their families still take shelter under it while they sell their wares to the people of the city. The cross at Shepton Mallet, too, remains part of the modern open-air market. Times have changed in five hundred years but the purpose of the market cross, the prototype of the market house, has not varied.

Villages have become towns, and towns have degenerated into villages since the Middle Ages. We may find a market cross, as at Castle Combe, in what is now a village but was once a flourishing town. The two things which stand out are that wherever there is a market cross or a market house, even in a village like Cheddar, there was once a locally important trading community and that this market cross or market house was the focal point of medieval and later commerce.

Later in the Middle Ages the crafts and religious guilds became the most important factors in determining the way of life and the prosperity of the towns. There was no clear definition of a guild. In one sense any society composed of members who had common interests could be called a guild. Certainly the guilds were the first corporate bodies to represent particular classes in society within the framework of the town. They began by being friendly societies concerned chiefly with the welfare of people working in a

particular craft or industry. They ended by being absolute arbiters of the industry's standards and of the conditions of the craftsmen engaged in it.

There were all kinds and manners of guilds. One, for instance, was formed to care for the people whose responsibility was to keep Maidenhead Bridge in working order. But in general the guilds of medieval England were the forerunners of modern trade unions, associations of men and women concerned with particular occupations dedicated to improving their standard of living, to limit entry into the craft and to look after the aged, the sick, and also the children of parents who had fallen on misfortune.

There was a great deal of opposition in most parts of England to the formation of the craft guilds because it was felt that they might exert an unfavourable influence on the traditional civic authorities. Later it was recognized that they were a power in the land which could not be gainsaid. Increasingly they became part and parcel of the governing authority of towns and cities. Moreover, it became recognized that the existence of craft guilds increased trade and that the standards which they set improved the standard of the crafts they represented.

Still later the local government of many towns devolved on the leaders of the craft guilds, and distinctive costume was adopted by many of them by permission of the sovereign, so that the craft guild merged into the livery company. The guildhall often became the town hall.

As early as the reign of Edward III the guilds were powerful in London and many other cities, and Edward himself was a member of the Merchant Taylors' Guild. Strangely, the influence of these associations has been preserved through the centuries and in recent decades it has not been unusual for sovereigns to be given honorary membership of one or more guilds as a mark of honour. So the tradition of six hundred years has been perpetuated.

The Mercers' Company was incorporated as a Livery Company in London in 1393. Before that the Grocers' Company, 1345, the Drapers', 1364, the Fishmongers', 1364, the Goldsmiths' 1327, the Skinners', 1327, the Merchant Taylors' Company, 1326, had all been incorporated, though the Mercers' Company always did and still does take precedence over the others. Among others incorpor-

ated before the end of the fifteenth century were the Haberdashers'
Company, 1448, the Ironmongers', 1454, the Vintners', 1436, the
Armourers' and Brasiers', 1453, the Bakers', 1307, the Barbers',
1462, the Brewers', 1437, the Dyers', 1471, the Cutlers' and the
Girdlers'.

There were and are many others. In all, eighty-one livery com-
panies were incorporated between the fourteenth and the twentieth
centuries, one of the most recent being the Guild of Air Pilots and
Air Navigators of the British Empire, which was incorporated in
1955. Apart from the eighty-one guilds which are also livery
companies there are two London guilds, the Parish Clerks' Guild
and the Company of Watermen and Lightermen, which are not
livery companies.

In the heyday of the craft guilds there were more than a hundred
registered in London. One may regard these craft guilds as the
governing bodies of particular industries, but many of them never
overlooked the purpose for which they had been founded, that is
to say, the relief of suffering among dependants of members of the
guilds and in particular the education of children of guildsmen.
The Mercers' Company, for instance, not only has its own
school, which was founded in the fifteenth century, but is the
governing authority of St. Paul's School, the foundation of John
Colet in the first decade of the sixteenth century. The Merchant
Taylors' also has its own school, while the Grocers' Company
controls Oundle School. There are many other examples of the
same trend. The Goldsmiths' College, for instance, was founded
by the Goldsmiths' Company in 1894 and passed into the control
of London University ten years later, and is still largely endowed
by the Goldsmiths' Company. Several of the constituent colleges
of London University owe a great deal to one or other of the City
companies.

When the guilds and livery companies became wealthy they put
their funds to the best of uses not only for the members of their
guilds but for the community at large. It is not surprising, there-
fore, to learn that the medieval guildhalls are among the most
important and architecturally the most significant of the secular
buildings of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
London's own Guildhall is one of the most impressive. It was

built in the fifteenth century, escaped the Great Fire, but was damaged by enemy bombardment during the Second World War. It was reconstructed in the 1950s and today survives as the oldest secular building in the City. It has been re-roofed, while its carved wooden statues of Gog and Magog have been reconstructed in facsimile by David Evans. The stained-glass windows, only two of which escaped damage during the raids, have also been made good.

The guildhalls of Norwich and Lincoln, though less magnificent than London's Guildhall, are equally significant. The Norwich guildhall, a fine building partially reconstructed during the Tudor period, has retained both its medieval appearance and its Tudor fittings. A modern guildhall has replaced it but it still stands as a link with ancient Norwich and survives as a changeless symbol of the old city. Norwich has many other links with its medieval prosperity, including a fourteenth-century merchant's house (Suckling House) which is one of the very finest of its kind in the country, but none more eloquent than the old guildhall.

The guildhall at Lincoln is less spectacular. It stands above one of the medieval gatehouses, the Stonebow, but is a fine example of fifteenth-century architecture and just as vivid a reminder as the guildhalls of London or Norwich of the time when city affairs were virtually in the hands of the leaders of the craft guilds and when wealth and prosperity were assured for those who subscribed to the principle of the guild both by financial support and by acting in conformity with its rigid conventions. There was no real distinction between the appointed officers of the guilds and the local-government officers in those times.

It was not, of course, only in the sphere of education and administration that the guilds were able to influence life in the later Middle Ages. Many of them established almshouses and hospitals for the care of the elderly or infirm. They interested themselves in every kind of charity at a time when the idea of a welfare state had not germinated, when the unfortunate were doomed to a life of poverty and distress, when even able craftsmen who had finished their effective working life had nothing to come between them and starvation unless they had been able to make some provision for themselves beforehand. And in an era in which, even allowing for

the change in the cost of living, rewards for craftsmanship were relatively small, making provision for old age and sickness was far more difficult than it is today.

So the guilds represented a beneficial influence, comparable in this respect with the abbeys and priories in a world in which humanity as we understand it was not recognized. That they became despotic in their control of individual trades and crafts was comparatively insignificant. That later, especially after the sixteenth century, they became unduly wealthy and did not perhaps make the best use of their wealth, was also insignificant compared with the great work which they performed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries towards the education of the people and the relief of suffering.

If the wealthy burghers were proud of their guildhalls, the common people were equally proud of the walls which guarded their town or city. The idea of walled towns goes back to time immemorial. One might even describe the Celtic hilltop settlements of pre-Roman Britain as walled towns, although the defences consisted only of deep trenches and earthen ramparts built up from the material scooped out of the trenches. Romano-British towns, however, were genuinely walled with defences of masonry held together by courses of the characteristic thin red bricks which were introduced by the Romans. Many of the Romano-British walls decayed during the Anglo-Saxon period but it is significant that the walls of Canterbury were in good repair at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the city was attacked by Danish troops. One of the most realistic and vivid scenes in Anglo-Saxon England is that conjured up by Archbishop Alphege patrolling the walls of Canterbury, stimulating the Saxon defenders to hold their posts, administering the last sacrament to the dying, and invoking the help of God for the defence of the city.

In Norman times and later the walls of towns were put into good repair or rebuilt entirely, often on the site of the Roman walls, utilizing material which the Roman engineers had collected for defending their towns. In the period of anarchy which lasted throughout the greater part of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries mural defences were very important to the security of townspeople. When the gates were shut and the wall parapet patrolled by

detachments of the citizens all felt they could sleep in peace, safe alike from the surprise attack of a baron in revolt against his sovereign or at war with another baron, and from the no-less-devastating raids carried out by bands of robbers and footpads which roamed the countryside almost without hindrance while the country was in the throes of civil war and a police force, as such, was non-existent.

In practice only the larger towns and cities were walled, though many smaller towns such as Wareham in Dorset had earthen defences which were probably as effective as those of masonry. Keeping the walls in repair was always a major financial commitment. It was the responsibility of the burgesses in almost all cases, as was the duty of patrolling the walls at night. Nevertheless, the maintenance of the walls was a matter of civic pride. In a few places, such as Canterbury, where authority was divided between the ecclesiastical and the secular bodies, where in other words it was just as much to the interest of the Church as to that of the town that the walls should be defensible, help was forthcoming from the Church even though in law the prime responsibility lay with the burgesses. So the handsome West Gate of this city was reconstructed with the help of grants made by the Church through the good offices of Archbishop Simon Sudbury, one of the few Archbishops of Canterbury who showed a genuine interest in the welfare of the city from which he took his title. It was sardonic that this admirable cleric and Chancellor, who was held in honour by most of the enlightened men of Kent, should be murdered in the Tower of London when the insurgents led by Wat Tyler gained access to the fortress.

Many other mural defences of medieval towns have also been well preserved. The circuit of the walls at Chester, for instance, is perfect, while the walls of York are precisely as they were in the Middle Ages, the only difference in the city's defences being that in the Middle Ages the walls were made unnecessary in one section by a marsh which has now been drained. Wherever such walls exist a walk round them along the parapet gives a wonderfully clear impression of the ancient town. At Chester the best views of the cathedral are from the walls and many of the best views, too, of the city's many ancient black-and-white houses, as well as of

some more modern ones which have been painted black and white to mimic the medieval style. At York, too, the impression made on anyone who has completed the circuit of the walls is of a still-flourishing but ancient city centred round the cathedral and owing little or nothing to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of industry which nevertheless has brought fresh life to a city which before then was in decline.

It is not possible to walk on the walls of Southampton, though here too the mural defences are most impressive and, as at Canterbury, one gate has survived more or less intact. Modern industry, however, has come much more obviously to Southampton than to York or Chester, while the salt marshes which once allowed the sea to lap against the walls at high tide have been drained so that the original character of this walled town is difficult to recapture.

It is very easy to be misled by the magnificence of medieval walls, by the graceful architecture of medieval guildhalls, and above all by the supreme artistry of the cathedral and parish churches, into thinking that life in a medieval city was one of grace and relative opulence. Certainly from the time of Edward III, who was the prime mover in the establishment of the English woollen industry, many merchants and a few craftsmen became wealthy as manufacturing industry came into its own. But life for the majority of citizens was poor and by our own standards squalid. The houses were small and almost all timber-built, so that fire was an ever-present menace. Many Acts of Parliament were passed requiring wooden houses to be rebuilt in brick or stone, but there was little response and no means of enforcing the Acts, so that when the Great Fire of London took place in the seventeenth century the vast majority of the houses were still of timber and offered no resistance to the conflagration. Fire destroyed Winchester, which was the capital of England at the Norman Conquest. Fire destroyed Marlborough on more than one occasion. Lincoln, Norwich and York all suffered. It would be difficult to find an English city which has not at one time or another been destroyed, or partially destroyed, by this greatest of medieval threats to security.

But that was not all. Drainage was negligible or entirely absent. The usual method of disposing of sewage was by way of runnels

in the narrow streets which carried the effluvium down to the nearest river. Often these runnels became blocked and the stench from them was something which, though English people took little notice because they were so accustomed to it, provoked much adverse comment from travellers coming from France and other continental countries. Moreover, there was gross overcrowding in the tenement homes, especially near the walls of the cities, and this became even more pronounced as more and more people came to live in the cities because they could find no adequate living on the land.

Travelling about the towns at night presented a real hazard because so many of those who had migrated from the country and had no regular means of livelihood chose to prey on the wealthier citizens. The fact that if they were apprehended they were certain of being condemned to death did not deflect them from their purpose. It was not so much a matter that life counted for little as that such members of the community who could neither read nor write lacked all imagination and lived only for the day.

One thing stands out quite clearly in this picture of medieval life in town and country: the gulf which still separated the wealthy or the nobly born from the common people was infinitely greater than it is today—so much greater that it is difficult to re-create the spirit of the times, even by the greatest stretch of the imagination.

Towards the Renaissance

IT is difficult to say when the first signs appeared of the Renaissance in England. When historians speak of the Renaissance they are often obsessed by the thought of the introduction of classical themes in architecture and art towards the end of the fifteenth and, more especially, during the sixteenth century. This was a movement which originated in Italy, spread across Europe, and ultimately produced a complete revolution in art and architecture, and indeed in literature and every other form of creative endeavour.

Yet the word Renaissance does not strictly mean a revival of interest in classical subjects. That revival was no more than a sign of the times, a sign that the new attitude to knowledge had reached maturity. More strictly the Renaissance implied a rebirth of interest in knowledge for its own sake—a development which marked the transition from the dark age of medieval life and thought to the comparative enlightenment of modern times.

The world of the Renaissance is often referred to as the antithesis of the Gothic world. In the nomenclature adopted by architects that is, of course, perfectly justified, but in the wider sphere of human learning it is far from representing the whole truth. A revival of interest in education pre-dated the reintroduction of classical forms by more than a century.

In a sense the strong impetus which the Anglo-Normans and their successors gave to the foundation and re-endowment of abbeys and priories throughout Britain was a step towards the ultimate goal. The monastic houses, as we have seen, became oases of learning in a world which was still largely ignorant. Admittedly the monasteries represented a rather specialized form of culture, strictly religious in interest. But that does not alter the fact that many of the monks were fine scholars and that although their scholarship was not shared by the people at large, the very existence of these cells of learning kept alight the bright torch of the humanities.

Moreover, as time went on, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the monasteries did play some part in bringing a wider education to a few of the privileged classes, when the habit arose of abbots or priors accepting for education the sons of their patrons or of local landowners. So the idea of a wider education was born for the first time since the heyday of Roman Britain. Doubtless the instruction given was largely religious and philosophical in the religious context of the term. But that was certainly not the sum total of it, while the really important point about this arrangement was that the young men who were trained for life by the heads of the monasteries or their assistants were not primarily intended for entry into the cloister.

In addition monastic schools, though limited in size and number, marked a further large step forward towards the conception of an educated people, even though it was accepted as natural and inevitable that ordinary workers in town and country should be unable to read or write. But that was still true after the fully fledged Renaissance had transformed sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. It was true right down to the nineteenth century, while even in this allegedly enlightened age of the twentieth century it is remarkable how many citizens are discovered to be unable to read or write, even though they may own a motor-vehicle or television set. In practice the discovery is only made when they are being married, or conversely when they are brought before a court. But the proportion of illiteracy is certainly far higher than most people imagine. The seeds of the idea of education for the masses took long to germinate and even longer to achieve a spectacular harvest, but the seeds were certainly sown in later medieval England long before the world had dreamed of a Renaissance style of architecture.

The Renaissance and the Reformation marched forward hand in hand. But Reformation as much as Renaissance is a term which admits of several meanings, only one of which is explained by reference to the break-away of the English Church from the wider Christendom during the reign of Henry VIII. That certainly was a cataclysmic change, cutting across the traditions of nearly a thousand years and one which had profound influence on the life and thought of succeeding generations. But that, too, was a

harvest from the seeds which had been sown hundreds of years before. If one understands by the term Reformation a reform in the attitude to and manner of religious practice, a wider but more appropriate meaning, it began just as soon as the idea of a wider education became current, these being really two sides of the same coin.

First, then, we must think of the gradual advance in standards of, and facilities for, education, if we are to understand the major change which was taking place in England, a change, incidentally, which was much more marked than in any other country of Europe. The monuments to this phase of medieval life abound, more especially in the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge, which were in a sense the complements of the abbeys and priories. University College, Oxford, for instance, was probably founded in 1249, Merton in 1274, Balliol in 1265. Even the New College was founded before the end of the fourteenth century, while others which pre-date the accession of Henry of Richmond include All Souls, Exeter, Hertford, Lincoln, Magdalen, Oriel, Queen's and St. Edmund Hall.

What an impressive list, and what a fascinating project for a day or a week to trace the surviving fragments of pre-Tudor times in the fabric of these colleges.

The university of Cambridge was founded according to tradition, and probably in sober fact, by students who had seceded from Oxford (that is why Oxford prides itself on being the senior university). Possibly in both places there were recognized bodies of teachers before the end of the twelfth century. Certainly a centre of learning at Cambridge was presupposed in a writ of 1231, though no college as such was established before the decade 1280-90, and the papal recognition of the university did not take place until 1318. Even so, the foundation of the majority of the colleges pre-dates by a century or more the conventional dates quoted for the Reformation, or for the full flowering of the Renaissance. Among those in existence before the end of the fourteenth century were Pembroke College, Corpus Christi, Clare, Gonville and Caius, and Peterhouse, the oldest of the university's colleges, said to have been founded by a Bishop of Ely in 1284.

One may argue that these and similar foundations were small

and insignificant by modern standards, that they were largely ecclesiastical in origin, and that the studies which they promoted were chiefly of a religious nature. That does not detract from the fact that they represented a major upsurge in the pursuit of knowledge and for its wider dissemination. That is their greatest significance in the story of medieval England and the reason why the remains of the medieval colleges, rebuilt and enlarged as every one of them has been not once but several times, form such an important and integral part of the medieval heritage.

One name in particular is associated with a decisive trend in this *renaissance* before the Renaissance. That is the name of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, who was born about 1324 and died just after the turn of the fifteenth century, probably in 1404. Those eighty years were possibly the most vital in the development of progressive ideas among churchmen and the laity alike. In his own person William epitomizes the change. It would be untrue to say that he was the first self-made man that England had produced since the Norman Conquest. But he was at least of relatively humble birth, an ordinary citizen of Wykeham in Hampshire, a village very much off the beaten track and the last place in the world from which one would expect an eminent divine and statesman to spring.

Nevertheless, he made his way in that narrow world of the fourteenth century, gathering the rudiments of education as he could and forming high ideals of service and of the relations between God and man. In later years he proved himself as a philosopher to be centuries ahead of his time. His talents and unusual knowledge brought him to the attention of the constable of Winchester Castle. In this William was probably fortunate but it was something that could have happened to anyone of above-the-average intelligence. Under the constable's patronage he came to the notice of Edward III, in whose service he achieved the impossible. He became ultimately Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Winchester.

Like almost all the prelate statesmen of those times, he found it hard to steer between the Scylla of offending his royal master and the Charybdis of acting against the authority of the Pope. That was a problem which beset every churchman who was also a

Minister of the Crown. He had two masters to serve whose interests were often incompatible, as Thomas Becket had discovered. However, after a period of disgrace William was restored to royal favour and was again appointed Chancellor by Richard II.

The most significant years of his life were his last ones, when he was responsible for the endowment and building of Winchester College between 1385 and 1395, and of New College, Oxford, between 1376 and 1386. Winchester College, or, as it was generally known, St. Mary's College of Winchester, was in effect the first English public school. New College, Oxford, was also known as St. Mary's College of Winchester in Oxford. That indicates the link between them. Thus was established for the first time the full curriculum of school and university. It is perhaps not so very surprising in view of the traditional and conservative nature until recently of Oxford, that boys only from Winchester were admitted to New College until 1854, and that to the present day there are more Old Wykehamists at New College than students from any other school.

Henry VIII and Edward VI in their foundations following the break-up of the monastic system were only following in the footsteps of this fourteenth-century divine, who had the vision to recognize that the basis of education was broadening and that literacy could no longer be allowed to be the privilege of a handful of people in the realm. Again it makes no difference if the basis of teaching was religious. It was, after all, a world in which religion still bulked large in every walk of life. What is important is that the school and the college together provided a course of studies carried out over a number of years and that when a wealthy middle class began to develop as a result of economic expansion in later centuries the sons of these new-rich families were able to take advantage of the expanding educational system as much as the sons of families descended from the Anglo-Norman nobility. The trade and religious guilds, too, that were mentioned in the previous chapter were active in broadening the basis of secular study, in founding schools and in ensuring that the children of their craftsmen, even if they had inadequate resources, should not be deprived entirely of knowledge of the humanities.

It is the same with the Reformation. Henry VIII was the

architect of the final separation from Rome, but coming events were casting their shadows before them long before that. However, that is more often acknowledged by historians than the early signs of the Renaissance. It is generally admitted that John Wycliffe was, as romantic writers describe him, the 'morning star of the Reformation'. Wycliffe was an alumnus of Oxford University and like so many undergraduates of yesterday and today, continued to teach after he had completed his studies. He became Master of Balliol and later Professor of Divinity. So he was well equipped to take a positive stand on the religious problems of the age, and the stand which Wycliffe took was unequivocally anti-papist.

Wycliffe might well be described as more anti-papist than Henry VIII or his advisers. He preached extensively against papal authority. He invoked his hearers to divorce their thought from the unyielding tenets of the Roman Catholic Church and work out for themselves a code of theology which might be more in keeping with the times. His followers, and they were many, were called Lollards. They exerted a powerful influence on thought in Great Britain long after the death of their leader, and did a great deal to further the purpose which he had set of establishing an independent church in Britain.

Wycliffe himself suffered the fate of many of the reformers of the Middle Ages. In 1382, two years before his death, he was brought before the courts and condemned as a heretic. His written works were burned but he himself escaped unscathed, a striking commentary on the respect which he commanded among British people and the sympathy which even the learned judges had with the growing revolt against papal authority. This revolt was not only concerned with religious matters but expressed the growing disquiet at the devitalizing influence exercised on the British economy by the dues which were paid by the Church in England to the Church in Rome, and by the convention that the king's chief advisers should be only those who were approved by the Pope.

However, Wycliffe's greatest contribution to the emancipation of English thought was the translation of the Bible into English, a work on which he and a number of his friends and colleagues spent more than ten years of their lives. For the first time (and it

The battlemented Tower of Frittenden Church in Kent

Buildings of the Pre-Reformation Period. *The George Inn* at Norton St. Philip (*left*) was a pilgrims' inn, like *The George* at Glastonbury. The Marlipins at Shoreham, Sussex (*below*) is an admirable example of a Gothic building virtually unaltered, and takes added distinction from the excellence of its flint checker-work

was genuinely for the first time) English people were able to appreciate the Old and the New Testaments, whereas before unless they had command of the Latin language they could only listen without comprehension to the priests intoning meaningless phrases and reading from the Bible in a tongue which was foreign to them. Religion had indeed been a dim, dark mystery.

Wycliffe was not the first of the religious reformers. That distinction belongs to the orders of preaching friars, who because they were in the orthodox tradition and accepted by the Pope and the bishops in Britain had far less to contend with than Wycliffe and his followers. Nevertheless, they were reformers in the true sense of the word. Their aim, like that of Wycliffe, was to bring religion out of the darkness of the Middle Ages into the bright light of understanding. They set about their appointed task far less obviously than Wycliffe but they achieved as much or more.

In the chapter on the abbeys something has been said of the history of these orders. Briefly, the aim of all orders of friars was to preach the word of God to the common people in a manner which could be understood by them. They had a great vogue in England and were encouraged by the clergy, because of their obvious sincerity and because the episcopal authorities believed that their preaching would bring home to many increasingly dissastisfied members of the community the majesty and power of God and a greater understanding of the nature of religion. They were encouraged among others by several Archbishops of Canterbury, while at no time did they meet with any substantial opposition.

It was very largely due to their influence that the Perpendicular Gothic style of church architecture was evolved. In prosaic terms one may describe the Perpendicular style as a revolt against the Decorated style and a return to the simple motifs of the Early English. That is true in the sense that churches of the latter part of the fourteenth and of the fifteenth century were by comparison with those which had preceded them plain and unadorned. The fanciful tracery of the Decorated period was no more. The vertical lines of the Perpendicular windows carried the eye in an unbroken sweep from the ground to the roof. The carving of the capitals of the columns of the nave was sparse. The formerly elaborate

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decoration of pews, chancel screens, and the furniture of the church in general was minimized.

But that is only one part of the story. The other part, the most important part, is concerned with the enlargement of the nave at the expense of the chancel, the increasing size of the windows, the raising of the roof, and the enlargement of the chancel arch. In other words, the typical church of the Perpendicular Gothic style, a style which was wholly English and owed nothing to continental models, was a vast hall ideally suited for preaching, well lighted by its large windows and, above all, a hall which gave to everyone who sat in it a good view of the priest at the high altar at the east end of the chancel. The former mysteries of religious devotion were swept away. Even though the services were read in Latin, the worshippers could see what was going on at the altar and could feel themselves to be associated, however remotely, with the clerical devotions. It was a genuine revolution, not only in design but in purpose, and assuredly brought home to the illiterate people who formed the bulk of the congregation something of the reality of religion.

Happily many of the churches which were built or rebuilt during this period have come down to us intact. Not all of them were directly influenced by the orders of friars but all, or almost all, of them owed a great deal to the new ideas which had been popularized by them. Many districts of Britain were, of course, still poor and could not afford to finance the building of new and larger churches, but in the principal wool-producing areas, especially East Anglia, Kent, and the west country, expense was no object at a time when merchants and farmers were incredibly wealthy and counted it a benefit to their immortal souls to con-tribute to the raising of buildings more worthy of the worship of God. Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Lavenham, the first two in Essex, the third in Suffolk, are usually quoted as three of the finest churches of this period. Each of them is a large church having regard to the size of the population resident in towns at that time. Each of them is wholly Perpendicular in concept, but whereas Saffron Walden appears to modern eyes bare and featureless, the other two represent an artistry which no age could decry, in spite of the lack of decoration and the austere lines of the fabric.

But those are only three out of many which perpetuate the spirit of the age. The parish churches of Kersey in Suffolk and Worstead in Norfolk, both of them villages today but at that time flourishing towns associated with the wool industry, are almost equally good examples. Worstead church was rebuilt about 1400 at the time when it was entering on its greatest period of prosperity, when indeed its name was being associated with a fine woollen yarn which still bears it. The manufacture of this cloth had been introduced by Flemish weavers more than a hundred years before. Though it is no longer carried out at Worstead or in any other part of East Anglia in which the industry was established in the later Middle Ages, it is maintained successfully elsewhere.

In Kent, another prosperous sheep-rearing area, the churches of Tenterden and Biddenden, among others, provide admirable examples of the same tendency. Here, as in East Anglia and the west country, the height of the church tower was a matter of great rivalry between neighbouring parishes. Finance was certainly available to build towers of almost any height, but even some contemporary historians deplored the tendency to embellish the parish churches in this way when other engineering works badly needed to be carried out but were neglected because of the vast sums which were poured into the rebuilding of the parish church, or the raising of its tower to a height exceeding that of its neighbours'. It was said, for instance, that the tower of Tenterden church, which was slightly higher than that of neighbouring Biddenden, was raised at the cost of defences urgently required to keep out the sea from the potentially fertile sheep pastures of Romney Marsh. But though here and there a voice might be raised against this preoccupation with the glorification of God, and though many may have felt secretly that the money of the merchants and farmers, of the weavers and spinners, might have been put to better advantage, few had the courage to bring their views into the open.

It was the same in the west country—another unusually prosperous area. Here churches like those of Northleach and Cirencester were rebuilt on a larger and more magnificent scale, and in precisely the same style of those of Kent and East Anglia, while even a long-established and always fabulously wealthy cathedral

such as that of Gloucester was enlarged and partly redesigned, and
a magnificent new tower added to it—a tower which even today
is a landmark for twenty miles around.

One may call these churches of the Perpendicular period, that is,
of the first phase of the Reformation of religion, austere. That they
certainly are so far as the fabric is concerned. But there was one
particular in which their artistry exceeded all that had gone before
them. That was in the design of the timber roofs, which gave
ample scope for the development of the traditional English art of
wood-carving.

It is invidious to pick out one or two examples from the many
magnificent carved timber roofs of East Anglia. But there is
certainly none more impressive than that of Mildenhall. Another
nearly as magnificent is the angel roof of St. Mary's Church in
Bury, a church which was built for the townspeople by the Abbot
of St. Edmundsbury from finances provided by the abbey. There
are, of course, many comparable with these but none finer.

The craft of timber-carving was not confined to the roofs and
furniture of the church. It spread during the fifteenth century
equally to secular buildings. Its finest expression was probably in
the remarkable timber roof of Westminster Hall. But on a lesser
scale the Great Hall of the Palace of Eltham, which has survived
alike the ravages of the death-watch beetle and of enemy bom-
bardment and is now restored to something akin to its original
appearance, is impressive in the extreme. The original date of the
hall of Eltham Palace is 1479, a date which may be taken as repre-
senting the heyday of English craftsmanship in wood, though fine
work was being done throughout the whole of the fifteenth
century.

So the attitude of the common man to religion was changing
well in advance of the Reformation proper. The dim dark mys-
teries of medieval devotion were giving way to a more enlightened
attitude. The process was given added impetus by the work of the
preaching friars and the revolutionary doctrines of men like John
Wycliffe. To put the matter more precisely, these changes in
attitude were no more than symbols of the changing times, while
the fact that wood-carving reached its zenith of craftsmanship in
the same period was entirely consistent with the position of

English art as a very important facet of an architectural style which was wholly English.

Social life was also changing in town and country, but especially perhaps at this time in the countryside. We have already traced the evolution of the fortress into the palace. Now in the fifteenth century the homes of wealthy or nobly born Englishmen might still be called castles but very rarely were they castles in the strict sense of the term. Rather they were castellated manor-houses retaining the form of the castle but not designed to withstand a siege for a single day.

In the more exposed parts of Britain where peaceful life was not yet assured, as on the borders of Wales and in the north country, one or two castles were still being built. An outstanding example is Bolton in Yorkshire, one of the last true fortresses to be built in England. It was begun in 1379 and actually completed before the beginning of the fifteenth century. It stands today as an impressive memorial of the troubled times which still afflicted the north country in the later Middle Ages. It is significant, however, that although its defences are strong it is still designed as a comfortable residence with numerous rooms, while the great hall has windows large enough to let in the sun and the air, in contrast with the small windows which were invariable in earlier fortresses.

In the south country Bodiam was one of the last castles to be built. This too stands today, though entirely ruinous, as a reminder of the kind of castle palace which was being raised at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is surrounded by a broad moat fed by springs—a lake in fact rather than a moat, which adds considerably to its beauty. It was begun within a few years of Bolton in Yorkshire, in 1386, and completed just after the turn of the century. It represents a very modified type of castle but one which would probably have proved effective against a siege, having regard to the limited means of warfare available at the time. Its principal defence is the wide moat but rising from it there is a strong wall protected by circular towers at the corners and rectangular ones in the centre of each face. Yet Bolton and Bodiam both stand for a phase of medieval life which was being supplanted by a more peaceful and vigorous economy.

Hurstmonceux, in Sussex, now the home of the Royal Observatory transferred from Greenwich, was being built within less than fifty years of Bodiam. It was completed in 1440, a brick-built castellated mansion surrounded, like Bodiam, by a moat but not designed by its architect for defence. Its castellated form is a sham, its battlements mere decorations. Unhappily the whole of the interior has been destroyed, though a first casual view of it shows the external walls to be almost complete and the gatehouse and the towers undamaged. Nevertheless, this was definitely a mansion and not a castle, in spite of its name. It represents as well as any the transition from a fortified home to a manor-house designed for the ways of peace.

Stokesay in Shropshire and Wingfield manor-house in Derbyshire are two examples of an intermediate type of dwelling-place. They retain the semblance of castles together with some worthwhile defences which might stand the occupier in good stead in the event of unexpected attack but are not designed primarily as fortresses. The accent is on graceful living rather than mere existence in the midst of a land peopled by potential enemies.

Raglan Castle in Monmouthshire offers an even better example of the changing times. Raglan had been a castle since the twelfth century, when it was one of the outposts of Norman rule designed to hold open the lines of communication into Wales. But no part of the present ruins are earlier than 1400, most of them dating from a complete rebuilding between 1400 and 1470. The significance of Raglan Castle is that although it was stoutly built and retained the design of a medieval castle in its rebuilt form, it was primarily a palatial residence. The great tower surrounded by its broad moat might have been intended for defence but the Fountain Court, the hall, the chapel, and the large number of private apartments which surrounded the Fountain Court were in the later tradition of fifteenth-century living which assumed that a peaceful occupation was possible and that the battlements would never be put to the ultimate test. As so often happened, still later additions were made to the castle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but it is at least possible here to recreate more or less precisely the appearance and the relative comfort of the fifteenth-century residence.

Tattersall Castle in Lincolnshire is even more illustrative. This, like Hurstmonceux, is a brick-built residence. Although much of it today is ruinous, the great tower with its magnificent sham battlements is almost intact and gives a wonderful idea of life in the palatial homes of the fifteenth century. There has been a residence on or near the site of the present castle since the twelfth century, when the Cistercian abbey of Kirkstead was founded by the Anglo-Norman family to whom the area had been granted. It is known for certain that in the early part of the thirteenth century a licence was granted for the building of a castle, though not a stone of this early fortress has survived.

The Cromwell family came into possession of the manor in 1367 and it was for this family that Tattersall Castle as we know it today was constructed. A certain Ralph Cromwell who held the title of Treasurer of England from 1433 to 1443 commissioned the building of the new Tattersall as well as of the church of Holy Trinity and the college, which survives as a picturesque group of alms-houses.

The most interesting thing about Tattersall Castle is that like Hurstmonceux it gives at first sight the impression of a strong-hold. The positions of the original two moats can be distinguished, as well as the ground plan of the mansion as it was. There was a large inner ward protected by the inner moat, this ward containing at its extremity the rectangular tower or keep which is the most dominating feature of the present ruins. It is almost certain that the outer moat was added in the fifteenth century and so, on paper at least, the strength of the defences was increased. It represents just one more example of English conservatism, since when Tattersall was built gunpowder was beginning to supersede the engines of siege which had proved so effective in the earlier Middle Ages and the brick fabric of Tattersall could not have withstood attack by besiegers armed with the new weapons. No, Tattersall is in a special sense a sham just as Hurstmonceux is, but a wonderfully handsome one and a very gracious place in which to live.

Minster Lovell Hall in Oxfordshire takes us a step farther in the story of the transition from the medieval castle to the Tudor manor-house. It was built during the first half of the fifteenth

century—an imposing mansion constructed round a courtyard. It is on or near the site of an alien priory which was seized by the Crown in 1414, so that there is no real connexion between the original monastic house, which is said to have been occupied by only two monks, and the fifteenth-century manor-house of which the ruins survive today in a picturesque position beside the clear flowing river Windrush. There was a manor-house, too, of which nothing has survived, during |the whole time that the priory was in existence and this old manor-house was still in use as late as 1423.

The precise date of the new Minster Lovell house is not known but it is believed that the old manor-house was demolished and the new one begun about 1430. It was completed by 1450. The ruins are meagre, but it is possible to reconstruct the position of the chapel, the hall and solar, together with the kitchen and the well which served it and small parts of the west wing. The south-west tower which almost overhangs the river was a slightly later addition built towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Times were certainly changing rapidly. An Englishman could feel confident that his home was his castle, even though it lacked the traditional works of defence, long before Henry VII ascended the throne of England.

The Age of Adventure

THE sixteenth century was a true age of adventure in Britain. It was not merely an age which produced adventurous seafarers such as Drake and the others who by their energy and skill defeated the Spanish Armada towards the end of the century and so made England unquestionably mistress of the seas. It was a century of rapid change, a century in which it seemed that the people's ideals and aspirations turned to the exploration of fresh fields, to the uncovering of much that had before been secret. In other words, it was an age of growing enlightenment in education, and of progressive ideas.

It is easy to say that all this was the consequence of the Renaissance and of the Reformation. That is an over-simplification of the solution to a problem which has puzzled scholars of every age since the sixteenth century. Both the Renaissance and the Reformation were genuine realities but they were the effects rather than the causes of the changes that took place during the century. The Renaissance, in its broader sense of the rebirth of knowledge rather than merely a renewed interest in classical ideals, had been imminent for more than a hundred years. It naturally took form during the reigns of the Tudor sovereigns, because life then was more settled and the fear of invasion from abroad or of internal strife was largely removed.

The Reformation, that is, the divorce of the Church of England from the Church of Rome, appears at first sight to be something much more definite, but it was not so. Like the Renaissance, it was the consummation of a tendency which had been apparent for many generations. British people have always been independent. Many had felt for a long time that the paying of dues to the Pope in Rome, the subservience of the English Church to the papacy, was insufferable. Wycliffe and the Lollards had striven in vain for freedom from the overriding authority of the Pope. It was merely accidental that the marital difficulties of King Henry VIII

precipitated the break which long before then had been inevitable.

The separation of the Church of England from that of Rome did, however, precipitate a major revolution in social life. The whole accent of living was no longer placed on the ecclesiastical. The secular side of life, as typified by elaborate public and private buildings, came into its own. But the Reformation had cast its shadow before it. Even during the reign of Henry VII secular building was rivalling in magnificence and costliness the ecclesiastical building which formed such a large part of the true medieval heritage. That is not to say that the building of churches ended with the Battle of Bosworth Field. Far from it. Henry VII himself was responsible for the construction of the magnificent chapel at the east end of Westminster Abbey, one of the most ornate and successful achievements in the latest style of Gothic architecture.

King's College Chapel in Cambridge was completed in the same reign although it was begun in 1446 and took almost fifty years to complete. It represents at once the final glory of Gothic art and the emergence of Tudor architecture, carried out without thought of expense. The fan tracery of the roof, though considered by many critics to be over-exuberant, is the equal of anything in Christendom, as fine in its own context as the fan tracery of the roof of King Henry VII's Chapel of Westminster. Moreover, the contemporary stained-glass windows, twenty-five in all, put in position between 1510 and 1530, are equally outstanding examples of the art of the times. They range over a variety of subjects but are principally concerned with the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. What a contrast they make with the nineteenth-century west window, diligently and skilfully executed but falling far below the supreme artistic excellence of the Tudor windows.

During the early part of the Tudor period, too, wealthy people were still endowing chantry chapels in parish churches. Many of these, with their striking fan vaulting, have an excellence which cannot be denied and does not deserve to be denigrated. In spite of this there is little doubt that the construction of secular buildings was beginning to take precedence over the rebuilding or embellishment of churches great and small. Hampton Court Palace and many colleges in Oxford and Cambridge demonstrate the transition.

Hampton Court Palace was a portent of things to come. It was built for Wolsey when he was Chancellor as a residence for himself and given by him to the King as a bribe when he was out of favour. The Garden Front and the Fountains Court were added much later to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren, but the whole of the west part, built in glowing red brick, was the work of Wolsey's architect and is a perfect example of Tudor architecture at its best.

There is a real feeling of adventure in this building, reflecting the adventurous spirit of the age. It was by far the largest English building in brick, a material which had been completely out of favour since Roman times. It derived obviously from the conception of the abbey rather than from that of earlier manor-houses. The embattled gatehouse and the series of quadrangles illustrate that fact forcibly. It was built largely in the English style of Gothic, the Perpendicular, with the flattened arches which are characteristic of Tudor times. Yet in a sense it was generations ahead of its times, as witness the highly ornate terracotta medallions which decorate the façade and for which Wolsey imported Italian craftsmen already imbued with the ideas of the Renaissance.

This revival of interest in classical themes was far from winning general acceptance during the reign of Henry VIII. The British people have always been as conservative as they have been independent in thought. Their conservatism is reflected in no medium better than in that of architecture. Throughout the century, even after the Reformation, there was the same conflict between traditional ideas and what people regarded as the new-fangled conceptions of the Renaissance. That is the reason why in the reign of Queen Elizabeth great houses were being built simultaneously in the traditional Gothic style and in quite advanced forms of Renaissance design. Vernacular building, that is to say, building as represented by the homes of ordinary people, continued right to the end of the reign in a style very little changed from that of the previous century.

The one thing which stands out in this century of prosperity and settled government is that the trickle of grandiose building which was apparent during the reign of King Henry VII and King Henry VIII became an all-embracing flood towards the end of the century,

when there was no single county in all England in which some great new house was not being built. After the Reformation the wealth which before then had been poured into the Church in one way or another, either in the financing of new churches or in the rebuilding of old ones, or in the building of chantry chapels, was by then diverted almost wholly to the raising of palatial homes. The wealthy families of the country, the new aristocracy which had grown to enormous stature on the proceeds of the woollen boom, as well as the old families descended from Anglo-Norman ancestors, vied with each other in devising more and more sumptuous dwelling-places. Many of these sixteenth-century homes are still virtually unaltered, though most of them are too big for modern needs and in some cases only a wing is occupied by the descendants of those who had them built.

Design progressed steadily; starting from the courtyard plan of Hampton Court Palace, it went through a gradual modification until the E shape was evolved. Many regard the E form of Elizabethan houses as a tribute to the Queen, but there is no evidence to support that far-fetched theory. Almost certainly it represents a natural modification derived from the courtyard plan and conforming ultimately to the Italianate Renaissance idea of an oblong house. First the gatehouse disappeared, together with the wall adjoining it. Instead of the gatehouse a more or less elaborate porch was built. This became the short stroke of the E. The other two sides of the courtyard represented the long strokes of the E, and these in turn became progressively less prominent, until they were withdrawn ultimately and the plain oblong house became a reality. Similarly the Gothic style of window went out of fashion and the plain oblong window took its place.

A few of the great houses of the Elizabethan age, such as the Countess of Shrewsbury's Hardwick Hall, were in advance of their times, just as Hampton Court Palace was nearly a century before. Hardwick Hall, 'more glass than wall', was a most progressive type of Renaissance building, its windows arranged symmetrically in parallel rows, its wings virtually non-existent. It looked forward to the fully developed Renaissance houses such as Fountains Hall in Yorkshire, which was completed in the first quarter of the following century.

A curious story relates that the Countess of Shrewsbury, 'Bess of Hardwick', had her new house designed as an affront to her sovereign, because Queen Elizabeth is known to have favoured the traditional forms of architecture and to have deplored the introduction of foreign ideas. Certainly no love was lost between the Queen and the Countess but the story, like so many other stories of the age, is quite unsupported. It is far more likely that the Countess of Shrewsbury commissioned an architect who had travelled on the Continent and was sympathetic to the Renaissance ideas which were then sweeping across Europe. Its significance, however, was that even in the last decades of Queen Elizabeth's reign many fine houses were still being built or rebuilt in the modified form of sixteenth-century Gothic, as witness the graceful Wakehurst in Sussex.

A great number of new farmhouses and manor-houses were also built during the sixteenth century in south-east England, especially in Kent, where the yeomen who had received special privileges at the time of the Norman Conquest had built up a modest wealth as well as a great tradition of progressive farming. These Kentish manor-houses were very different from the palatial homes of the aristocracy but none the less attractive.

Boxon, near Bredgar, is one of the finest and one of the most perfectly preserved, but there are no less than twenty within a radius of ten miles of Maidstone which illustrate admirably the development in domestic architecture from the hall home of the Middle Ages to the characteristic house of Elizabethan times. Whereas most of the homes of the aristocracy were of stone, the Kentish manor-houses—and others in many prosperous parts of England—were half-timbered, the timber beams often being carved for decorative effect and in accordance with the age-old tradition of English supremacy in the art of wood-carving.

The finest sixteenth-century wood-carving in the country, however, is not in Kent but in Shropshire, where the Elizabethan gatehouse of Stokesay Castle shows superb artistry. The Feathers Hotel in Ludlow only a few miles away, now restored to something like its original appearance, is an imaginative essay in black and white and shows the decorative potential of timber and plaster which is not excelled by the buildings of any other century, as

satisfying to the eye of twentieth-century observers as it must have been to the people of the sixteenth century.

Compton Wynyates, nestling at the foot of the Cotswold plateau near Edge Hill, is equally significant, if only because here brick is the principal material of building in a country in which locally quarried stone was plentiful and in which the traditional building material was and still is the oolitic limestone which underlies the Cotswold hills. This Warwickshire manor-house, the ancestral home of the Marquess of Northampton, was built, like very many others in the sixteenth century, by a London merchant as a country home. It was as expressive of the changing nature of society as of the developing character of architecture. Although the greater part of the building is of brick, it makes effective use also of the traditional stone and of timber. The formal gardens laid out soon after the house was completed in 1520 were a masterpiece of Tudor landscape gardening, a composition which can only be compared with the Tudor garden in Hampton Court. Like Hampton Court, too, Compton Wynyates is built round a courtyard to which access is gained by a porch taking the place of the traditional gatehouse bearing the arms of Henry VIII. Not yet had the court-yard house given place to the new-fangled ideas of the Renaissance, involving the disappearance of the courtyard and the substitution of an oblong house with diminishing windows. No, Compton Wynyates represents the full flowering of early Tudor domestic architecture, making use of the newest materials and the finest craftsmanship but as yet unhampered by the formal inhibitions of Renaissance architects and craftsmen.

London itself possesses one admirable example of Tudor crafts-manship in the gatehouse of St. James's Palace, brick-built like Hampton Court and Compton Wynyates, traditional in its con-servative design, yet up to date in its use of brick and in its strictly Tudor rather than pure-Gothic design. It makes an admirable comparison with the entrance to Lambeth Palace, the London home of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Staple Inn represents the half-timbered style, though it belongs to the latter part of the century.

It is relatively easy to distinguish without special knowledge between Gothic and Renaissance forms, whether in ecclesiastical

or secular building. Quite apart from the major differences already discussed, such as the distinction between the courtyard type of dwelling place and the rectangular mansion, one might select as most characteristic the contrast between the roof-line or silhouette of the traditional or Gothic form and that of the Renaissance form. The silhouette of the Gothic house was irregular, that of the Renaissance house the reverse. The Gothic or, to be more precise, the native Tudor house had a steep-pitched roof to which added emphasis was given by quaintly shaped or moulded groups of chimneys, often of brick and making a major contribution to the aspect of the house when viewed from a distance. A succession of gables added to the effect. In the Renaissance house, by contrast, the chimneys were subdued, the gables disappeared entirely, and every feature was arranged in a regular order or sequence, one part of the façade corresponding exactly with another, as in the rows of rectangular windows at Hardwick Hall.

In a transitional period there is always a tendency to retain the traditional against the advance of new-fangled ideas. No period is more illustrative of that truth than the twentieth century, when the outmoded Victorian Gothic and Victorian classical styles have been revived again and again in spite of the growing dominance of contemporary design first brought to light in the u.s.a., Germany and other European countries. So it was precisely in the sixteenth century. A progressive lady such as the Countess of Shrewsbury might build a house on the Italianate principle. Some might admire it and others might decry it; there was often strong reaction. Compromise was the order of the day.

So Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire, built between 1580 and 1590, is classical in design but Gothic in execution. The Elizabethan portion of Penshurst Place in Kent is a magnificent compromise between the two styles, whereas Burghley House in Northamptonshire, and Montacute House in Somerset, both built during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, are more classical though retaining many traditional features. The Long Gallery of Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, one of the most outstanding monuments in England to the genius of Elizabethan builders, defies exact definition. One might say, without fear of contradiction, that it is wholly English yet it incorporates many ideas deriving from

the revived interest in classical design. Bramhall Hall in Cheshire is characteristic of the houses that were being built in the Welsh Marches, with its accent on the decorative value of pattern in black and white. Although this handsome house was in the main built earlier, the Elizabethan additions are considerable and blend with the earlier parts to make a harmonious design.

So one might go on indefinitely, quoting one example against another and reaching no firm conclusion, except that by the end of this century of adventure the Renaissance in its special sense of a revival of interest in classical knowledge was complete, but its acceptance in terms of architecture was by no means universal. If one needed any additional evidence of this, one need only look to the most elaborate of all the late-sixteenth-century mansions, Longleat House in Wiltshire, which is built around two courtyards in much the same style as Hampton Court Palace but is essentially classical in its design and decoration.

Tudor architecture in general is often called collegiate, not only because houses like Longleat and palaces like Hampton Court follow the monastic plan of construction round a succession of courtyards but because the sixteenth century saw an unprecedented development in the building of schools and colleges. This tendency was in part a direct result of the Reformation and followed the suppression of the monasteries between 1536 and 1540. Closer scrutiny of the facts, however, demonstrates that many scholastic foundations were established long before then. It is fair to say that the Tudor and Elizabethan encouragement of education was one important phase of the Renaissance and was only accelerated by the Reformation.

The fact remains that Oxford and Cambridge together provide many illuminating examples of sixteenth-century architecture and evoke more vivid impressions of that century of change and progress than any other places. The actual list of new foundations is impressive enough. In Cambridge Christ's College was founded in 1505, St. John's in 1511, Magdalene in 1542, Trinity in 1546, Emmanuel in 1584. In Oxford Corpus Christi was founded in 1516, Christchurch in 1546, Trinity in 1554, St. John's in 1555, Jesus in 1571. But this list, however impressive, does not represent the sum total of the contribution made during the sixteenth century to
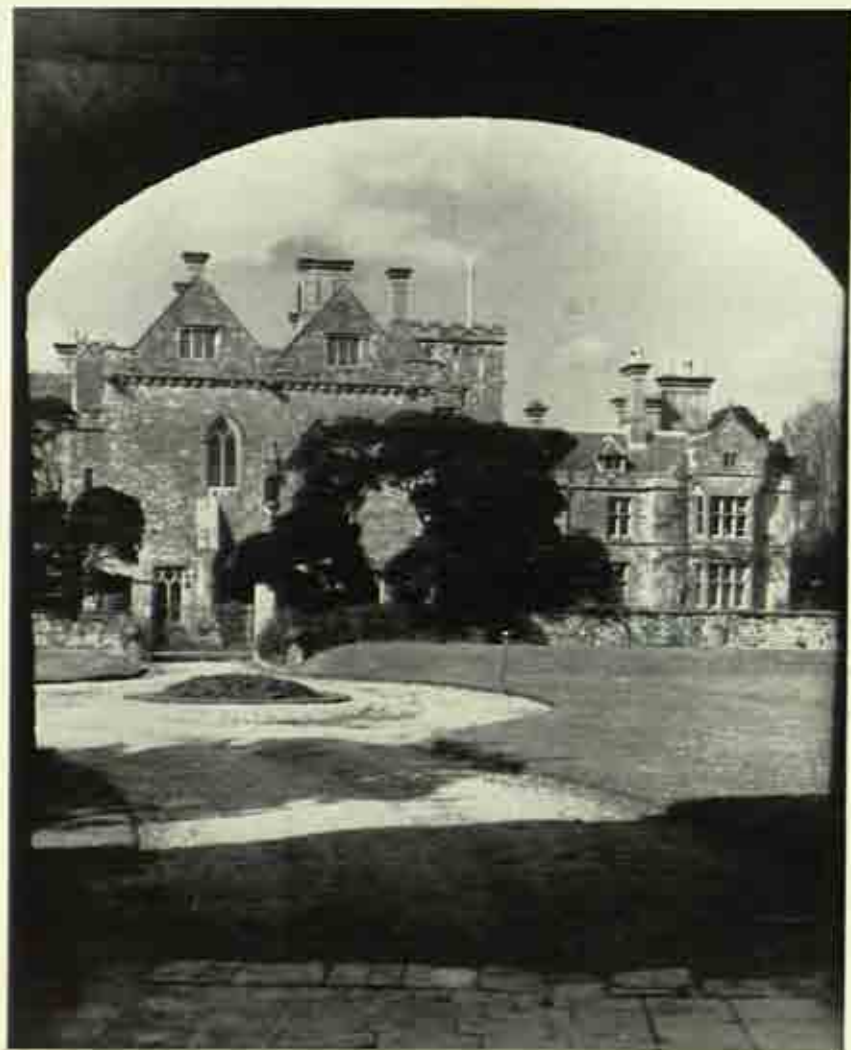
Palace House, Beaulieu, Hampshire

The Elizabethan Manor of Cardington in Shropshire

the diffusion of knowledge through collegiate foundations. Many which had been founded in previous centuries were enlarged or re-endowed.

Christchurch in Oxford is probably the most illustrative of all. It is in everything but name a college of the university. In fact many guide-books refer to it quite wrongly as Christchurch College, but the difference is only one of nomenclature. From early times there had been in existence on part of the present site of Christchurch a convent dedicated to St. Frideswide, a monastic establishment which had had a long and distinguished history, and probably because of its location in Oxford a special reputation for the erudition of its officers. It was not very clearly distinguished from the numerous other foundations in Oxford which were dedicated wholly to the dissemination of learning.

Cardinal Wolsey 'persuaded' the prior to surrender the monastery to the King in 1522, several years before the official dissolution of the monasteries. Wolsey too was the effective founder of Christchurch. He obtained from King Henry VIII authority to establish a college on the site of St. Frideswide's for a dean, canons and scholars. The purpose of this collegiate foundation was to facilitate the study of divinity but the charter by which it was founded allowed also the the study of civil law, medicine, and the arts. Thus at this earliest foundation Christchurch was virtually a college in the modern sense of the term. The revenues of St. Frideswide's were allocated to the upkeep of the college, together with land and other revenue amounting in all to an annual value of nearly £2,000, a very large sum for those times.

It has been said that during the sixteenth century no less than forty religious establishments were suppressed in order to provide sufficient funds for the maintenance of the college. Even if that is an exaggeration, it illustrates the prevailing attitude of the age and the change of accent in life from the religious to the secular, from the monomania of divine studies to the more liberal application of learning.

Wolsey did not live to see his dream come true but Henry VIII appears to have been no less keen than Wolsey on the development of secular knowledge. He had little patience with Wolsey's egomania, as represented by the title which Wolsey intended for the

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college—'The College of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey'. However, he was sufficiently interested to refound the college in 1532 under the title 'King Henry VIII's College' and to give it additional endowments. Fourteen years later he translated the episcopal see from Osney to Oxford and made what was in effect the college chapel the cathedral of the new diocese. That arrangement has persisted to the present day. Oxford Cathedral serves as the chapel of Christchurch or, as one might put it in a different way, the chapel of Christchurch is the cathedral of the diocese of Oxford. That year, 1546, in which the transference was made is generally regarded as the date of the foundation of Christchurch because Henry, in conference with the new bishop and the head of the college, drew up yet another constitution for Christchurch and incorporated its mixed character as a cathedral and a college in a new charter which clearly defined the cathedral of Christchurch on the one hand, and Christchurch, an integral part of Oxford University, on the other.

Unhappily very little of the Tudor building has survived. Christchurch, like all the other constituent colleges of the university, has been enlarged several times since then and shows, like most of the others, an impressive contrast between Tudor and later Renaissance forms of architecture. The kitchens, the finest of their kind in England, belong to Wolsey's original foundation. The hall is also to the design approved by Wolsey, though it was not completed before his death. But the part of Christchurch which most visitors see, including Tom Quad, was not completed until the seventeenth century when Dr. John Fell ('I do not love thee, Dr. Fell') was Master. Even Tom Tower, which houses the bell known as Great Tom, possibly brought here from the cathedral of Osney, is largely the work of Sir Christopher Wren and so belongs to the latter part of the seventeenth century, though the lower phases of the gatehouse were part of the Tudor foundation. It seems almost as though no one was content to allow older buildings to stand, however beautiful they may have been, when the fashion for Renaissance forms of architecture was in full flood.

Many of the British public schools can be attributed even more precisely to the Reformation than the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. Before Tudor times a number of schools had been

founded, such as William of Wykeham's Winchester, which has already been mentioned, and Eton, but before the accession of Henry VIII most of the schools were monastic and concerned chiefly with the training of novices for the life of the convent.

Great as is the temptation to condemn the dissolution of the monasteries, and much as King Henry VIII has been maligned by historians on that account, it is only fair to record that much of the revenues derived from the expropriation of monastic establishments was diverted to the foundation of schools which made possible the education of the children of the new merchant class, the middle class of the sixteenth century, and of others who could not possibly have obtained instruction in any formal sense under the old régime. The good work started by Henry VIII was continued by Edward VI, in whose reign Berkhamsted and Shrewsbury Schools were founded, as well as Christ's Hospital (the Bluecoat School), and numerous others, many of which may have become less important as the centuries have passed but which provided in their time a much-needed and long-overdue opportunity for study.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Harrow, Rugby, and Uppingham Schools, to name only three out of more than a score, were founded, and the endowments in each case were derived to a greater or lesser degree from the suppression of monastic establishments. Similarly, in Queen Elizabeth's reign extensions were made to the Inns of Court, thus facilitating the study of law.

The importance of the suppression of the monasteries can easily be over-exaggerated seeing that the sixteenth century was a period of expanding commerce and industry, a period in which the national revenue was constantly increasing. The fine record of educational achievement was due possibly as much to the expanding economy as to the single act of King Henry's in separating the Church of England from the Church of Rome and suppressing the monasteries as outposts of papacy. The two themes are interwoven just as are the Reformation and the Renaissance. King Henry himself endowed the King's School at Canterbury, which took the place of the priory school of Christchurch. And schools such as this thrived throughout the following decades, whether the

sovereign, like Mary, was a Roman Catholic or, like Elizabeth, a Protestant.

The importance of these foundations is illustrated by the fact that John Twyne, the first headmaster of the King's School, who was appointed in 1541, became Mayor of Canterbury and was in office during Wyatt's rebellion in the reign of Queen Mary. Though Twyne was a nominee of King Henry VIII and might have been expected to have reservations about the Roman Catholic convictions of Queen Mary, he actually gave his loyalty impartially to whichever sovereign was on the throne and in 1553 was responsible for raising 100 mounted soldiers to join the Queen's forces in suppressing Wyatt's rebellion, even though Wyatt was striving only for a return to the religious sentiment of King Henry's reign in revolt against the Catholicism of the Court.

That example could be paralleled by many others. It illustrates how small an influence was wielded in the latter part of the sixteenth century by religious controversy. Bishops might be burnt at the stake. Ordinary men and women might elect to sacrifice themselves for a religious ideal, but the world of scholarship was something apart, and the new-found opportunity for enlightenment and knowledge, an opportunity which in the case of Christopher Marlowe produced a brilliant poet and man of letters from the most humble of origins, was one which men of tolerance and insight were not prepared to sacrifice on any pretext whatever.

In no way was the spirit of adventure of the sixteenth century better illustrated than in the development of the towns. The towns had already become an integral part of English life. Their development was predestined from the time when they arose as settlements grouped about a market cross under the protection of a castle or abbey. Nevertheless, in the sixteenth century progress was rapid beyond all expectation; though the present hierarchy of towns was undreamt of, though a Devonshire town like Totnes was far more important than a Liverpool or a Manchester, the modern pattern of life was beginning to emerge and the towns were perhaps the most important facet of that pattern.

London was by far the largest and most important of all English towns. Just before the Reformation it had more than a hundred churches and a population which exceeded a quarter of a million.

After the Reformation the number of the churches was reduced but it remained by far the largest town in England.

Norwich, the capital of East Anglia and the centre of the flourishing weaving industry, was for most of the time next in size but its population was little more than a tenth of that of London. After Norwich came York, Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Bristol. Plymouth was virtually founded by King Henry VIII, who saw in it a town destined to play a major part in the defence of the realm. Plymouth's heyday came in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, when it was one of the great naval and shipping centres of Britain. Exeter, the Queen of the West, was vastly enhanced by the policy of development initiated by Queen Elizabeth. Its medieval guildhall was refaced in the Elizabethan style, but it remained a village compared with London.

The England of Queen Elizabeth I witnessed also the first real development of villages, which have become such an integral part of the English scene. The transition from hovel to well-built cottage, reflecting an immense upward surge in the standard of living of rural workers, was a direct development of the Reformation just as surely as was the embellishment of the towns with guildhalls and fine market houses.

Until the fifteenth century villages as we know them today were virtually non-existent. With the breakdown in the feudal system the lords of the manors had become the farming community of the country and it made little difference whether the workers in the fields were attached to the lord under the feudal system or employed by him as hired workers. The homes in which they were required to live were equally mean, insanitary, and often ruinous, though, of course, the attitude of landlords varied from place to place, and varied also according to their prosperity and their feelings towards the people they employed.

In some ways the villeins and the cotters had been better off than the hired labourers who replaced them. The villeins at least always had a plot of land which they could call their own. Hired labourers were often without such advantages and it was not uncommon for their shacks to be grouped together just inside the fence of the lord's demesne. Numerous laws were passed requiring village homes to be spaced out, so that a minimum of land could

be available to the labourers for their own use, but these laws were disregarded, like so many others which sought to regulate rural life and customs.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century a gradual change of sentiment became apparent. This may have been due partly to the relatively settled conditions of the country and the establishment of a firm government under the aegis of King Henry VII. It may possibly have been due also in part to a growing social conscience on the part of the landlords, though it is easy to exaggerate this tendency at a time when there was no real link between the landlord and his people, when rural workers were still regarded as of no greater value, and of no more sensitive feelings, than the horses and cattle which were the stock in trade of a successful farmer.

The great woollen boom, too, must have made a difference, especially in those areas—the Cotswold country, Kent, and East Anglia—which profited most from it. The woollen boom made it possible for the large-scale farmer to operate on an economic basis with only a fraction of the number of workers he had required when more of the land was ploughed. That in turn must have meant that the worst of the village people's hovels were left deserted, or were destroyed.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, we can distinguish many hundreds, probably thousands, of rural workers' cottages, most of them still inhabited, all of them showing the indisputable evidence of having been constructed according to the best contemporary styles of vernacular architecture, solidly built of whatever material was available in the district. Very many are graceful in appearance, whether stone-built or half-timbered, all of them are pleasant places in which to live, small replicas of the farmhouses and mansions which were being built in the style at the time.

It was at this time, too, that the village community was moved outside the fence of the lord's demesne, so that the village as we know it today came into existence. There were still the same efforts on the part of the government to regulate village building as there had been in previous centuries, and in order that each cottager should have an adequate patch of land to cultivate for

himself village homes tended to be strung out along the road which led from the neatest highway to the church and manor-house. It was not long, however, before the law was once more disregarded and an increasing tendency was observable for the construction of the tight-knit village community, sometimes built round a pond, sometimes round a green, always in close proximity to the church—the village group which has become traditional and which remains today one of the most pleasing features of the English countryside.

Chiddingstone, in Kent, is unique in England because it retains a whole row of cottages dating from the reign of Henry VII, together with a number of other dwelling-places built before the end of the sixteenth century. Lacock, in Wiltshire, more properly regarded as a town than a village, not only has a great number of sixteenth-century houses and cottages but also some that are certainly earlier, one or two of which may date back to before the Wars of the Roses. Lacock, too, has one of the very few cottages which still show signs of the cruck method of construction, that is to say, the construction of a house or cottage on the basis of the boughs of trees meeting at a point. In this case the timbers are still visible, but the area between the boughs has been filled in with bricks of very much more recent date. Apart from these there is a number of other villages which are predominantly Eliza-bethan in character, from Castle Combe in Wiltshire to Leigh, Hever and Bredgar in Kent, and Thornton-le-Dale in York-shire.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century and in the early part of the seventeenth century the Puritan element in English politics looked askance at the morals of the village communities. People pointed with righteous indignation to what they called the excesses of the May Day celebrations. Contemporary diarists have given us an unusually vivid picture of these annual carnivals, which in one form or another date back to prehistoric times, when the advent of summer—of the season of growing things—was the most important event in the rural calendar. Many customs undoubtedly survived from a primitive way of life. Tradition dies hardest in the communities which are least educated, and one would expect the village communities of this time to be the strongholds of such

traditions. There is abundant evidence that the raising of the may-
pole on the village green was a challenge to the people of the next
village to seize it by force. Many were the bloody fights between
the youths of one village and those of its neighbours. One must
dismiss such fights as evidence only of exuberant high spirits
which could be released two or three times a year at the most—at
the May Day celebrations, at the harvest home, and perhaps on one
or two important saints' days. In an age in which life was counted
cheaply and in which maiming was the common punishment for
offences which today would be considered worthy only of putting
the miscreant on probation, whatever injuries were suffered in
these fights would have been considered negligible.

The Puritan complaint, of course, went deeper than that. Ob-
servers entrenched in the fire-and-brimstone interpretation of the
gospels saw in the May Day festivities an invitation to the grossest
immorality. They claimed that it was common for village maidens
to be carried off to the woods and there deflorated. On some May
Days that must have been a cold and wet prospect, while very
many villages had no convenient woodlands near by. However,
there was probably some truth in the Puritan allegations. May is,
after all, the mating season and the village people lived very near
to nature. Their life was normally occupied with work except on
the Sabbath. The opportunity of strolls down lovers' lanes which
we expect of country people in the twentieth century was sadly
lacking. The May Day festivities may well have released inhibitions
and have encouraged village youths to pledge themselves to the
girls of the village in no uncertain terms. But the Puritan legis-
lators were wrong in regarding this as immoral in any reasonable
interpretation of the term. Rather it was part and parcel of the
way of life inherent in the conditions in which the rural people of
England lived in the sixteenth century. However, when Oliver
Cromwell came to power the May Day ceremonies throughout the
country were suppressed ruthlessly. Maypoles were forbidden to
be raised and numerous but quite unenforcible laws were passed
to raise the moral standards of the rural people.

It is to the credit of the Commonwealth government that a
number of new cottage homes, substantial but unlovely, were con-
structed to improve conditions in many villages, especially in eastern

England. Great Munden and Westmill in Hertfordshire, almost every village of Cambridgeshire, and a number near Huntingdon, show unmistakable traces of this utilitarian building drive. Admirable as it was in its own way, one cannot avoid comparing unfavourably the aesthetic qualities of the Commonwealth cottages with those of the Tudor and Elizabethan villages. Since then there has been little change in the character of the village community. One or two ancient villages, however, like Milton Abbas, which were still inside the park or demesne of the lord of the manor in the sixteenth century, were transferred bodily and rebuilt outside the limits of the park.

A number of farmers left their farmhouses in the villages for a home well away from the village after the Georgian Enclosure Commissioners had revolutionized the face of southern, central and eastern England. There was modest expansion in late Georgian and Victorian times, and a more rapid development during the drive for rural rehousing which followed the close of the First World War and has continued to the present day. But in the main the core of the old village remains as it was hundreds of years ago, with its medieval church, its manor-house and its attractive cottages of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries, often built around a green or pond or some other natural feature giving unity to the whole composition.

That picture of village life contrasts strongly with the predominantly Celtic parts of Britain, especially Cornwall, Wales and Scotland, where the village group so well established in England never materialized. In the inland districts of Cornwall, in the greater part of Wales, and in almost the whole of Scotland the typical village today is very much as it was 400 years ago, with the cottage homes strung out along main or secondary roads and the church an apparently unrelated unit often at some distance from the nearest cottage. That arrangement reflects the tradition of hill farming, of relatively small holdings, of comparatively little wealth. To a lesser extent it reflects also the permanence of the Celtic tradition as opposed to the Anglo-Saxon-Norman one.

So far as village England represents the most important surviving part of the sixteenth-century legacy, of the England of the

time of Queen Elizabeth, it is wholly satisfying as a microcosm of the life of the country in those times. The only reservation that must be made is that in estimating the character of these villages one must put out of one's mind's eye all that has been superimposed on them during the last 200 years and bear in mind also that many Elizabethan cottages have been rebuilt or replaced and that many groups of apparently Elizabethan village homes were once farmhouses, converted into two, three or more cottages when the farmer left his village home for his more commodious house in the open countryside during the eighteenth century.

There are well over 10,000 villages in England and it is fair to say that nine out of ten of them retain some link, however slight, with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among so many it is virtually impossible to select a few which tell a special story, yet it is possible to divide this great number into groups which reflect different traditions in different parts of England—traditions derived in the main from the varying materials from which the villages were built.

The cob cottages of Devon and Cornwall are world famous. With their gaily colour-washed walls and thatched roofs they make a striking picture on a summer day. Many of them have been inhabited continuously for nearly five hundred years, the finest of all tributes to the skill of Tudor and Elizabethan builders. Today many of them have passed out of the hands of the rural workers or fisherfolk who dwelt in them for so long and are lovingly tended as week-end cottages or homes for retired people.

Many, however, would choose the stone-belt villages of the west country as the finest links with Tudor and Elizabethan England. The stone belt—that is, the belt of country in which almost every farmhouse and cottage is built of the local stone—includes the whole of the Cotswold country from the valley of the Bristol Avon on the south to that of the Warwickshire Avon on the north. It extends northwards into the uplands of Northamptonshire and can be traced as a narrow ridge north-eastwards across England to the Cliff of Lincolnshire. The local building stone varies slightly from place to place but it is characteristically the oolitic limestone, so called because under the microscope it looks as though it were composed of millions of eggs (Greek *oon*—egg).

The most significant feature of this building stone is that it weathers beautifully to a warm, mellow grey—and weathers within a remarkably short space of time. Moreover, the Cotswold stone reflects the prevailing colours of the countryside, and especially of the ploughed fields.

So the villages in the Wold 'belong' to the country in a sense in which no other group of villages can be said to do. The effect is enhanced by the stone walls which here take the place of hedges. The whole countryside is a world of stone and unforgettable if only for that reason. The Cotswold country shared to the full in the wealth and prosperity that accompanied the woollen boom of the later Middle Ages and flourished exceedingly in Tudor and Elizabethan times. Consequently its ancient farmhouses are especially well built, while its cottage homes dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are as attractive as any in England.

From the hundreds of villages in the Cotswold itself, and in its extension, it is difficult to pick out a few which stand out above the general level of excellence. No two people will make the same choice. Probably Bibury and Bourton-on-the-Water, cursed by its popular name of 'Venice of the Cotswold', are the most favoured, together with Broadway on the highroad from Oxford to the Midlands. But these three are distinguished only by being well known. None of them is necessarily a finer or more beautiful village than Snowshill, only three miles from Broadway but extraordinarily little known, Minster Lovell in the valley of the Windrush near Burford, or a dozen others which lie off the beaten track. Farther north where the Cotswold merges with the rolling uplands of Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire, the villages are less compactly built and make a less dramatic impact, but all of them are attractive, while Rockingham, straggling along both sides of a road falling steeply down a hillside, has a very special attraction of its own and an unusually large number of cottage homes more than three hundred years old.

One feature of the Cotswold country is especially encouraging. Many of the modern housing estates are being built, in spite of the greater expense, in locally quarried stone instead of in the ubiquitous brick. Within a few years—within a generation or two at the

most—the colouring of these new village homes will be indistinguishable from that of the ancient farmhouses and cottages. This is surely one of the most imaginative facets of modern rehousing policy.

The flint-built villages of the chalk country are just as characteristic as the limestone villages of the Cotswold. But flint is a much more intractable building material than limestone, as well as being more difficult to quarry. The result is that flint-built cottages and farmhouses are less widespread in the chalk than limestone buildings in the Cotswold. Chalk itself is too soft for building, though here and there where the chalk is harder good use has been made of it, especially in building churches. An example of a variety of chalk used for building is the clunch of Kent and Sussex, but clunch represents the exception rather than the rule. In most areas chalk is far too friable, far too liable to rapid erosion to form an adequate material even in the building of cottages. Not so the flints, which are hard and resistant to erosion and which incidentally formed the raw material from which prehistoric peoples made their weapons and implements.

There are a number of flint-built cottages in the South Downs country, especially in East Dean and West Dean in West Sussex (as opposed to the two villages of identical name in East Sussex) and in many churches in the downland country from Kent to Wiltshire. Sometimes whole flints were used but more often the flints were split into two and arranged so that the split edge, which is black, is on the outer side. Doubtless four hundred years ago almost all cottages and farmhouses and churches in the chalk downlands of south-eastern and southern central England were composed of flint and rubble and clay, but relatively few have survived to the present day.

Because of the obvious shortcomings of flint as a building stone, brick made its bow in these areas rather sooner than it did in areas productive of a first-class building stone, such as the Cotswold. Flint work, except where it has been retained as a conscious anachronism, is overshadowed by the brick-built cottages and houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whereas too, as we have seen, a large number of modern dwelling-places in the Cotswold country are being built from the oolitic limestone, no

dwelling-places in the south country are being constructed from the native flint.

In East Anglia there is an almost complete lack of local building stone. That has little significance at the present time when transport is relatively easy and brick is available from the brickfields of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. In Elizabethan times, however, the lack of easily available building stone made it necessary to improvise. Timber was still available from the Forest of Essex and the well-wooded country which bordered the Fens. Therefore the majority of Elizabethan, and indeed of seventeenth-century, cottages and farmhouses were timber-built with plaster to provide the infillings between the timber beams. Before the Reformation the plaster panels were narrow and buildings could rightly be described literally as half-timbered. After the Reformation the timbers were more widely spaced and the plaster infillings became larger. That is one of the best ways of distinguishing dwelling-places built before and after the middle of the sixteenth century.

East Anglian builders clearly felt that plaster, even if it were colour-washed, was a rather dull infilling. Accordingly the art or craft of parge work, or pargeting, was developed. This became a traditional East Anglian craft which persisted for several centuries and has been revived in recent times. Parge work, which may be defined as decoration on the surface of the plaster covering of a house, varies from modest designs carried out by the abrasive action of a twig or simple instrument to designs in high relief, such as those which make the Sparrow's House in Ipswich one of the most interesting buildings in England. Often the whole façade of dwelling-places, the timbers as well as the plaster infilling, was covered with wash and decorated with pargeting. In other cases only the plaster parts of the façade were decorated by this means. In either case the result is often attractive and always distinctive and sets the Elizabethan and later buildings of East Anglia apart from those of any other district. East Anglia, too, came under the influence of artistic designs derived from the Low Countries in the early part of the seventeenth century, when many of the designs which we think of as typically Jacobean were introduced by Flemish craftsmen and adapted to the needs of the larger houses of

Norfolk and Suffolk. To quote one example, stepped gables in brick, which certainly emanated from the Low Countries, were virtually confined to Norfolk, Suffolk and northern Essex.

Before tiles for roofing were introduced, in the absence of a suitable stone for roof coverings, thatch was almost universal—thatch provided by the reed beds of the East Anglian river valleys, especially that of the Waveney. Many of the thatched cottages of Elizabethan times have since been roofed with tiles but there are still a number of villages, such as High Roding in Essex, where the tradition has been maintained, and many others in Norfolk and Suffolk.

One area in Norfolk differs in the style of its architecture from all other parts of East Anglia. That is the cobblestone belt which extends along the north Norfolk coast between a low range of hills and a wide expanse of recently formed salt marsh. Weybourne and Stiffkey are two typical villages which have changed but little in the last few hundred years, each with its medieval church and its ancient cottages and farmhouses. Even in Sheringham, an ancient fishing village which has become a modest seaside resort, in Blakeney and Wells-next-the-Sea, both important ports in the Middle Ages which have declined with the retreat of the sea, many of the older houses and cottages are built of cobblestones and present an appearance as distinctive as it is attractive.

The north country has far fewer links in its village architecture with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than the south, if only because it was far more sparsely populated. But the Pennine country is a stone country as surely as the Cotswold, though the stone is less attractive and of a darker and more sombre grey. Most of the settlements of the Pennine country are small towns in the valleys which fall away to the east of the main ridge, including Wharfedale, Wensleydale, Nidderdale, and Langstrothdale—dull grey towns like Hawes near the head of Wensleydale. Villages are few and far between but there are many isolated farmhouses built of the local stone and here and there groups of cottages.

In Elizabethan times life was hard in the Yorkshire dales, as indeed it has been until the last fifty years, the standard of living poor by comparison with that in the south. As one drives down any of these Yorkshire dales one can still see the underlying reasons

for this. In the upper part of the dales there are only poor grass fields on which a limited number of sheep can find pasture. Lower down there is better grass, giving pasturage to small herds of cattle. Only where the dales begin to merge with the wide Vale of York are there ploughed fields with larger farmhouses and well-developed villages.

Alston, a former county capital, is typical of the small towns of the northern Pennines. It is the highest set of all the market towns of England but to all appearances and in all essentials it is a village community in spite of its ancient market and its few larger houses. Its chief interest is that it is almost wholly stone-built from locally quarried Pennine stone.

Langstrothdale does not possess a single village worthy of the name but contains numerous scattered farmhouses and cottages, and two or three churches, all built of the same Pennine stone which outcrops on the hillsides and is exposed on the bed of the stream which waters the dale. Every facet of the countryside reflects the same colour, that of the underlying rock. It is a stone country above all others. Even so, the most attractive villages of Yorkshire are in the dales of the North York Moors and the fishing villages sheltered by the cliffs where the North York Moors are cut off by the sea. Hutton le Hole, between Helmsley and Pickering, Staithes and Runswick, between Redcar and Whitby, are typical, but there are many others which bear comparison with these three.

Farther north Durham and Northumberland were just as thinly peopled in the sixteenth century as Yorkshire. There, most of the towns and villages grew up in the shelter of medieval castles or abbeys. So Durham prospered only because it was the seat of the Bishops of Durham, who held absolute sway over the county palatine, while Newcastle began to thrive only when a late Norman stronghold had been built to guard the crossing of the Tyne. Durham and Newcastle have become large modern towns while Warkworth and Bamburgh, both castle towns in the Middle Ages, are today quiet and reserved villages still dominated by the ruins of their castles but with a character which is entirely their own.

Finally, there are the villages of the Welsh Marches, distinguished like so many others by the materials used to build them.

Here, as in East Anglia, there was a lack of ready-made building stone, so that the half-timbered style became traditional and has been maintained largely to the present day. Whereas East Anglian villages were distinguished by their parge work, those of the Welsh Marches developed a tradition of decoration in timber. One may call the style black and white, but it is more appropriately known as magpie, especially in Cheshire and Shropshire, where artist craftsmen in timber became highly skilled in devising elaborate decorative effects by the shaping and carving of timber beams.

Weobley, Eardisland and Wigmore are three of the most attractive villages which have survived to the present day in a form reminiscent of, if not identical with, that which they had at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is a compliment to this established style of the Welsh Marches that many brick-built houses of modern times have been covered in whitewash, with black painted strips superimposed on the whitewash to mimic the timber beams of the later Middle Ages.
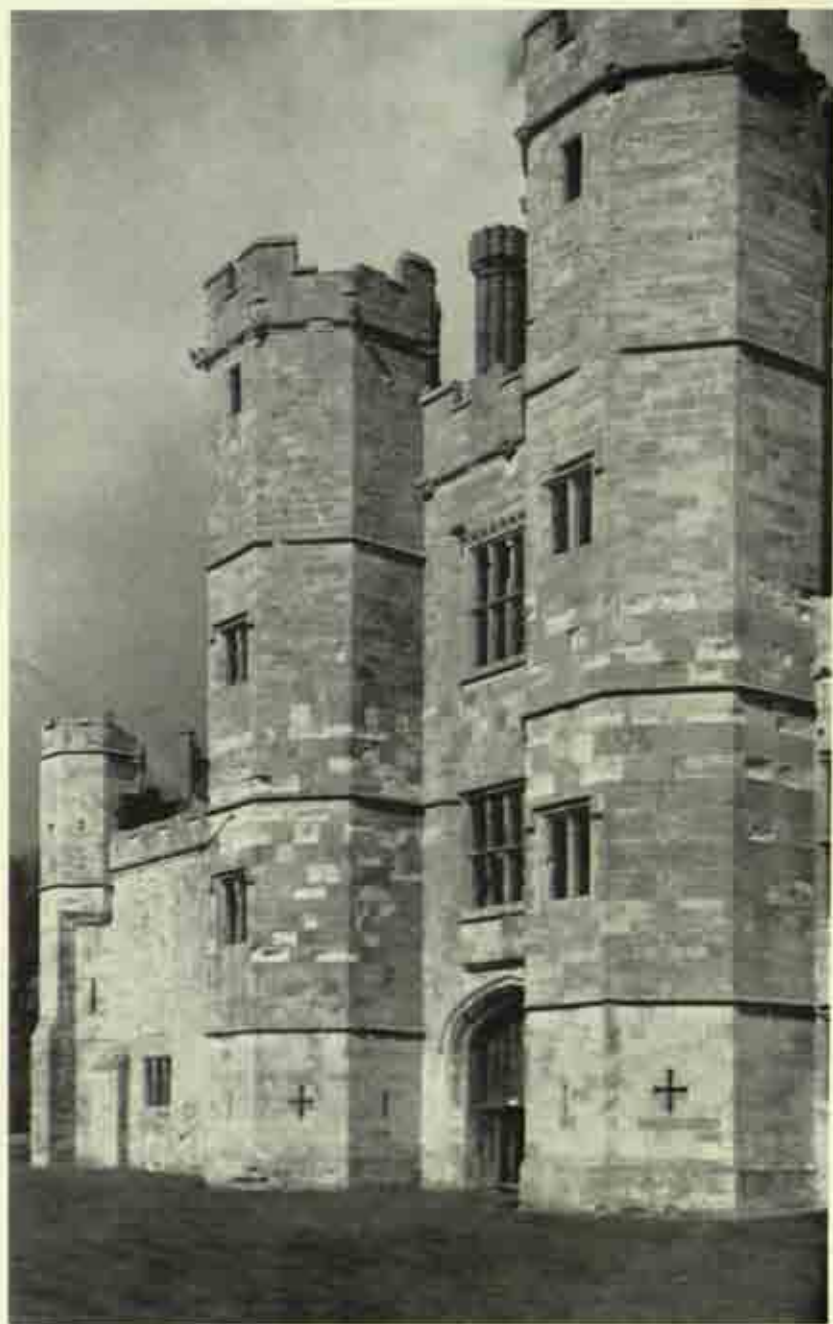
Titchfield Abbey, Hampshire

The Medieval Legacy of Wales. Cummer Abbey (*top left*) is a picturesque fragment of a once important monastic house near Llangollen. The ruins of Llandovery Castle (*top right*) dominate the town
Arbroath Abbey, Angus (*below*)

Wales before the Union

CONSIDERING the relatively small population of Wales before the Industrial Revolution it is remarkable how many links it possesses with the Middle Ages. Even so, most of them, including the majority of the castles and abbeys, were inspired by the Anglo-Normans and their successors rather than by the native people of Wales. At few times between the eleventh and the sixteenth century was native Wales a truly united country. It was rarely governed by a single sovereign, while most of its people who cherished the ideals of independence were hill farmers and their associates, dependent on the intractable nature of the terrain to defend them from the attacks of the English. At no time could Wales be said to have come under the rule of the English kings until the Act of Union, even though token allegiance was given by individual princes and English kings could claim without exaggeration that they commanded the whole of the coastline and most of the fertile valleys running up from the coast towards the mountains.

The Normans themselves made a vigorous effort to bring the more fertile parts of Wales under their control. They are remembered by a series of castles stretching from Cardiff across the fertile Vale of Glamorgan to the south-west, all of which have been rebuilt but almost all of which are of Norman origin. Always their victory was a Pyrrhic one, in the sense that the Welsh people when they were threatened by an enemy, whether from England or from any other source, retreated to the mountains and, ensconcing themselves in the firm protection of these natural bulwarks, were able to neglect the enemy, however strongly he was positioned in the valleys.

Cardiff Castle is one of the finest examples of Norman fortresses in South Wales. It was founded as early as 1090 by Robert Fitzhamon, Earl of Gloucester, who is said to have utilized the Romano-British defences in the construction of his stronghold.

Even in the present buildings there are well-marked traces of Roman materials, and tradition in this case almost certainly represents the truth. Fitzhamon or one of his immediate successors constructed a mound and earthworks, while the workmanship of the keep raised on the mound proves that it was built well before the end of the twelfth century.

Cardiff was one of the principal castles designed to hold the Vale of Glamorgan in check and to allow the Anglo-Norman overlords to develop its agriculture and its natural resources. It is not surprising therefore to find that Cardiff Castle had a more or less continuous history between the eleventh and the fifteenth century in spite of the attacks of insurgent Welsh people. The greater part of the present-day ruin dates from this period though the apartments and the encircling wall were reconstructed late in the nineteenth century, when the Marquis of Bute was the titular owner of the castle before he gave it to the people of Cardiff as a memorial to the city's long and eventful history.

Similarly Pembroke has a Norman origin. It is one of the most romantic in appearance of all Britain's castles, jutting out on a knoll into the Pembroke river and still looking every inch a medieval fortress. A motte-and-bailey castle was constructed here within a decade or so of the Norman Conquest and this early fortress was strong enough to come unscathed out of a well-organized attack by the Welsh people in 1094. Like all the other Norman castles in Wales, it was rebuilt within about a hundred years of its foundation. The oldest part of the present building is the keep, which was probably redesigned to the order of the Earl of Pembroke early in the thirteenth century. Much of the remainder is of only slightly later date and shows well how re-designed Norman fortresses were utilized by the sovereigns of the thirteenth century to hold their subject people in check, or to act as spring-boards for attack against insurgents.

Though the Normans regarded Wales as part of the English realm they did not succeed in subduing it nor in quenching the fierce spirit of the Welsh hill men, who maintained a politically independent existence until Tudor times and have maintained their independence of spirit until the present day. Unhappily Wales, like so many other countries which had a nominally

independent existence during the Middle Ages, suffered almost as much from civil discord as from external attack. However, late in the twelfth century Owen Gwynedd was undisputed overlord of the north of Wales, while Rhys ap Gryffyd was unchallenged in the south. These two princes proved a thorn in the side of the Anglo-Normans ensconced in their castles on the Welsh borderland, and defeated the army of Henry II in 1166 when he was rash enough to make a determined expedition to conquer the whole of Wales.

On the death of Owen Gwynedd civil war broke out and there was no more hope of unity. As a result Anglo-Norman influence, especially in the south, that is in the most fertile part of Wales, was allowed to grow unhampered. When Llewellyn the Great became Prince of Gwynedd the position changed. He married an illegitimate daughter of King John and before his death in 1240 was regarded with respect and indeed with some affection by many of the English nobility. His grandson, Llewellyn ap Gryffydd, who was effective master of the greater part of Wales during the second half of the thirteenth century, was remarkably successful in pressing back the English forces and gained at least one brilliant victory against the army of Henry III. In the end he was recognized by Henry as Chieftain of all Wales by the terms of the Treaty of Shrewsbury.

The next important phase in the story of Wales, so far as it is related to the medieval heritage, was the attempt made by King Edward I to pacify the whole of the fertile areas, especially those adjoining the north coast. War was waged for nearly three years and ended with the publication of the Statute of Rhuddlan, which, though it recognized Wales as a territory separate from England, denied it the rights of an independent sovereignty.

Many of the most magnificent castles of North Wales date from this period, including Harlech, Beaumaris and Rhuddlan itself. Caernarvon had been long established, but it was remodelled during the reign of Edward I. Although the room which is pointed out by guides as the birthplace of King Edward's son, the first Prince of Wales, had not been built at the time of his birth, there is no doubt at all that Edward's son was born in the castle which preceded the present structure and that the King's dedication of his

son to the people of Wales was a master stroke in the relations between the two countries.

Edward I was active only in the north. This was probably because the south was held more securely by the descendants of the Anglo-Norman noblemen to whom the land had been granted by William of Normandy. Even so, the many castles of Norman origin in the south were rebuilt about this time in accordance with the latest principles of military engineering introduced from the East, while a number of new ones also were constructed.

Caerphilly Castle, one of the most notable castle ruins in the whole of Britain, is the most outstanding of these. Commanding one of the richest parts of Glamorgan, it is a castle which even in ruins suggests an impregnable fortress and one which could be held by extraordinarily few defenders against the enthusiastic but poorly armed Welsh tribesmen, who were the only expected enemies. Including the earthworks it covers thirty acres and is a true example of the concentric castle usually associated with the name of Edward I. Nevertheless, it was built between 1250 and 1300 and was designed to the order of the Earl of Gloucester.

Amazingly it fell to the Welsh forces under Owen Glendower in 1403, but that was the only time that its defences were breached. At the end of the Civil War in England Oliver Cromwell ordered that its battlements should be dismantled, but attempts to destroy it with gunpowder were unsuccessful, a fact which gives some idea of the passive strength of its mural defences and the extraordinary thickness of the walls. The lake of nearly fifteen acres which served as a moat was formed by damming the small stream which runs near by. In this respect Caerphilly shows remarkable similarity to some English castles such as Kenilworth and Bodiam, both of which were protected by artificial lakes fed by adjoining streams.

Although it is true that most of the castle ruins of Wales have an Anglo-Norman or English origin, a few are wholly Welsh in conception and were designed as fortresses to be used against the encroachment of the English rather than as outposts of English rule in Wales. Thus the castle known as Dinas Bran, on a hilltop almost a thousand feet above sea-level near Llangollen, though its history is obscure, was certainly a fortress of Welsh chieftains from

the earliest times. There are records that it was held in the thirteenth century by the overlords of the northern part of Wales and repulsed many attacks by English forces based on Shrewsbury, though at one time its owner made peace with the English and helped them in their efforts to subdue the Welsh. By the sixteenth century it was already in a ruinous condition and today its meagre fragments are more remarkable for the magnificent view which they command than for any intrinsic beauty of architecture.

One must beware of the impression that the Welsh people of the later Middle Ages were either savages or heathens. Far from it. A tradition of learning had been carried on without a break since the introduction of Christianity during the Anglo-Saxon period of England, when many of the Romano-British people sought refuge among the hills of Wales, as the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes advanced across the lowlands of England.

As time went on a literary and musical tradition grew up; the learned men and the bards of Wales had a reputation which spread far beyond their own land. The bards were the Welsh equivalent of the English minstrels who looked to their patrons among the aristocracy of the Welsh tribes for their bread and butter, and showed in their music, but more especially in their poetry, a deep knowledge which was handed down from father to son. Moreover, the monastic movement, the greatest civilizing and cultural influence in England, was far from absent in Wales.

Strata Florida has already been mentioned. There is a tradition of a Celtic monastery near the present site of the abbey. Certainly a Cistercian house was established late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century, and there was probably a Cluniac priory before that. We know little of the actual history of the monastery but there are numerous references to it as the educational and cultural centre of Wales as early as the eleventh century. It continued to exert a powerful influence until the dissolution. Though the Cistercian house at least was endowed by one of the Anglo-Norman overlords who had been granted this part of Wales and in the first instance monks may have been introduced from Normandy, it remained Welsh in character and soon settled down under the Cistercian rule as predominantly a Welsh house. Even its architecture shows strong Celtic influence. Wherever there is a

cross, as on the graves of the monks, it is Celtic rather than Anglo-Norman in character. Strata Florida must have been a wealthy foundation, too, as well as a culturally important one, as witness the beautifully decorated medieval tiles, many of which survive almost miraculously to the present day.

The counterpart of Strata Florida in the east is Valle Crucis, situated in a narrow combe of the Berwyn mountains looking towards the valley of the Dee near Llangollen. Valle Crucis, like Strata Florida, was a Cistercian abbey, founded by one of the Princes of Powis towards the end of the twelfth century. It continued in active existence until the dissolution. Its foundation by a Welsh princeling indicates its Welsh character, even though these eastern marches of Wales were to a greater or lesser degree through the centuries under the influence of the Marcher Earls of Shrewsbury and Chester. The monks here carried on with their work in the face of constant conflict between the English and the Welsh, between the Marcher Earls and the Welsh princes. In general, both sides respected the integrity of the monks and left them so far as possible in peace.

Quite apart from its historic importance, Valle Crucis stands high in the medieval heritage because of the beauty of its surviving ruins, which include substantial parts of the abbey church and of the chapter-house. These show a mixture of the round-headed style of the Normans and of the pointed-arch style of Gothic builders. Since the Norman part cannot have been completed much before 1250, it reflects also the time lag in Gothic ideas reaching into the conservative areas of the north-west, a tendency which is apparent in all the historic monuments of Wales, north-west England, and Scotland. Salisbury Cathedral and Wells Cathedral were being built in the fully fledged new style translated from the Continent while builders in the far north and west continued to employ the traditional design and to beautify their churches with the traditional mouldings and carvings of the Romanesque period. That is precisely the same tendency which we have noted in the sixteenth century, when the native Gothic styles fought a long rearguard action against the imported ideas of the Italian Renaissance.

Strata Florida and Valle Crucis were undoubtedly the two most

important centres of Welsh culture during the Middle Ages. There were, of course, many others but the majority were as much English as Welsh, because they lay in more open country towards the north coast and the south, which were always under the domination of the Anglo-Norman barons and knights, and their successors. Basingwerk, for instance, was founded early in the twelfth century by Randolph, Earl of Chester, one of the most effective as well as one of the most implacable of the Marcher Earls. The military and the monastic movements, as always, went forward side by side. Pitiless warriors like Randolph founded abbeys not as a salve to their conscience but because in a world in which life was counted so cheaply the savagery of war was considered not so much inevitable as an end in itself and religion was regarded as a separate part of life, quite consistent with the warlike tradition. Though the ruins of Basingwerk are neither so complete nor so romantically situated as those of Valle Crucis, they include part of the monastic church and of the chapter-house, as well as insignificant fragments of some other of the conventual buildings.

Then there are the monasteries founded in the Vale of Glamorgan, the area which above all others was dominated by the Anglo-Normans and in which their religious foundations were introduced as a deliberate means of helping to pacify the native people, or those of them who had not taken refuge in the hills.

The greatest of these was Neath. The ruins of Neath are the most impressive of all the monastic ruins in Wales, and date mainly from a thirteenth-century rebuilding, though the actual Cistercian foundation endowed by the Anglo-Norman overlord was in existence well before 1150. The ruins of the monastic church are impressive enough, though they include only part of the west front and the walls of the nave, but the most remarkable thing about Neath is that so many of the conventual buildings have survived, if only in ruins, including the dormitory, the refectory of the lay brethren, and an interesting vault above which the monks' frater was built.

Margam Abbey, near Port Talbot, is a modern house but the grounds retain the remains of a twelfth-century Cistercian abbey, this one, according to tradition, founded by Earl Robert of Gloucester, another of the Marcher earls who combined soldiering

with good works. Margam is remarkable for two reasons, first that a great deal of the Romanesque work of the original Norman abbey church has survived in the present parish church, and secondly, that the craftsmanship, especially the stone carving, displays an artistry which is the equal of almost any similar medieval building in England. In particular, the west front and the nave bear the stamp of the very finest Romanesque architecture, while the chapter-house, rebuilt in the thirteenth century, is an equally fine example of early-Gothic architecture and by contrast, to give the appropriate Welsh flavour, several Celtic crosses, also of a high standard of artistry, have been placed at the west end of the church. One is reminded of Elisaig's Pillar only a few hundred yards from the ruins of Valle Crucis, which is one of the finest of the medieval Celtic crosses even though it was defaced during the Civil War.

Finally, Ewenny, only a few miles from Margam, was a Benedictine priory founded about the same time as Margam as a dependent house of the abbey of Gloucester. The chief interest of Ewenny is that it was so clearly built with a dual purpose in mind. The priory church, like that of Margam, still seeing service as a parish church, is an attractive piece of Norman architecture but the crenellations of the tower show so very clearly that it was built with an eye on defence, for the crenellations are no mere fancy of its architect but make the tower a genuine fortress which could be held almost indefinitely in face of enemy attack. The same is true of the surrounding wall and the gatehouse. As this, like the others in Glamorgan, was an Anglo-Norman foundation, one must assume that the local Anglo-Norman knight who held the land from the Earl of Gloucester regarded the construction of a priory church as an added weapon in his armoury of defence against the Welsh people.

In a country which was ravaged by civil war and by war between the native people and the people of England, it could not be expected that internal development would progress as rapidly as in England. Nevertheless, during the later Middle Ages great progress was made in building roads and bridges, and so bringing one part of the country into communication with another. One of the most spectacular of these developments was the building of the bridge over the Dee at Llangollen, which linked the sheep walks

of the northern Berwyn mountains with the growing market town of Dolgellau. The bridge was built during the fourteenth century and was endowed by the Bishop of St. Asaph. Before then the northern part of the Berwyn mountain country had perforce to look to Ruthin and Denbigh for the markets which the area needed, while only the less fertile southern Berwyns looked towards Llangollen.

After the bridge was built Llangollen rapidly became the centre of an increasingly prosperous sheep-rearing country, a market town and later an industrial town concerned mainly with the processing of the fleeces won from the sheep which ranged over the mountains. The present bridge at Llangollen has been widened but otherwise is little different from the medieval bridge, which was numbered among the seven wonders of Wales.

Perhaps it is significant that, of the seven wonders of Wales, the bridge at Llangollen is the only complete structure which was man-made. The others were the mountain of Snowdon, the bells of Gresford church (man-made indeed but only a part of a greater whole), the well of St. Winefride, the steeple of Wrexham church, the yew trees of Overton, and the Pistyl Rhaiadr. It is no exaggeration to say that the building of Llangollen bridge encouraged the flannel industry of eastern Wales more than any other single factor, and made the Berwyn mountains, which had hitherto been a remote and little-developed district, into one of the richest areas in Wales.

Inevitably the houses of Wales do not compare with those of England, if only because conditions in the later Middle Ages were not suitable for building permanent residences. We have already referred to castles of the Edwardian period and later. One might say without any fear of contradiction that the castle was the unit of Welsh inhabitation, whether the castle was English on Welsh soil or the stronghold of a Welsh prince. Genuine homes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are rare enough in England. In Wales they are virtually non-existent, because peace was not assured before the Union and there was no real spur to provoke the Welsh landowners to build houses other than castles. So we are left with the ruins of the castles and not much else. Plas Newydd in Llangollen is probably one of the earliest of Welsh

houses. Even so, its foundation was many years after the Reforma-
tion and the greater part of it was added during the eighteenth
century. The great spate of building which changed the face of
England during Tudor and Elizabethan times is entirely absent
in Wales and there are very few, if any, houses as opposed to
castles which pre-date the Reformation.

The story is approximately the same in the case of the towns.
Aberystwyth is one of the most distinguished of modern Welsh
towns and with its castle gives the impression of great age. Yet
Aberystwyth, now the commercial and educational centre of mid-
west Wales and one of the most important towns in the whole
country, has no real history as a town prior to the nineteenth
century. There was a castle here in the twelfth century but all
traces of it have disappeared. During the campaign of Edward I
towards the end of the thirteenth century it came into its own as a
place in a strategic position commanding the narrow coastal plain
of west Wales, and a castle, of which slight ruins remain, was con-
structed during that period. A town, as so often happened, grew
up round the castle but it was more than usually harried by the
native Welsh and existed only as an outpost of English rule for
more than two centuries. Tradition relates that the town nestling
under the shadow of the castle walls was burnt to the ground at
least four times during Welsh insurrections against English domi-
nation, and it was not really until the latter part of the eighteenth
century that Aberystwyth as we know it today had its birth, while
it was not until the beginning of the present century that it took
its place as one of the principal towns of Wales, while the Univer-
sity College of Wales, which forms a most conspicuous part of its
sea front, was not founded until 1872.

The other towns of west Wales have a similar history. The con-
clusion is inescapable that town life in Wales did not really begin
until the nineteenth century except in the few cases in which
Anglo-Norman development resulted in the growth of towns
which were more English than Welsh. Monmouth is a case in
point. But Monmouth is not in any sense a Welsh town, but rather
an outpost held by the Marcher earls as a part of England against
the Welsh insurgents. If evidence is required of this, one need only
look to the bridge over the Monnow, which to this day is

protected by a defensive gateway, the only bridge gateway in the whole of Britain built for the sole purpose of preventing invaders from penetrating into the area held by the English.

The four cathedrals of the old foundation are a very important part of the medieval legacy of Wales—Bangor, Llandaff, St. Asaph and St. David's.

Bangor has a history which goes back to the sixth century, when one of the many Celtic monasteries of the west was founded on the site. The cathedral was the centre of a diocese well before the eleventh century but the history of the cathedral has been a troubled one. Records show that it was destroyed within five years of the accession of William of Normandy, when Norman armies were seeking to reduce the coastal districts of Wales. The Normans soon made amends and financed the building of a church which by all accounts was one of the finest in Wales, but this, too, was destroyed by fire during the campaigns of Edward I about 1282. Less than ten years later a new church was being constructed, and this was completed about 1360.

This Gothic church survived for only half a century. During the struggle for Welsh independence under Owen Glendower it was once more burnt and for a hundred years thereafter no one bothered to rebuild it. Henry of Richmond was on the throne of England before the reconstructed church was completed. Then the Reformation was at hand and the churches of Wales and the west country generally were neglected. The result was that when Sir Giles Gilbert Scott started a restoration in the nineteenth century the cathedral was once more ruinous. Today Bangor Cathedral, converted into a parish church, is still doing good work in the service of God.

The story of St. Asaph is remarkably similar. It has the distinction of being the smallest cathedral of the old foundation but like Bangor it is still in use as a parish church. There was a monastery on the site before the end of the sixth century, when the church of the monastery soon became an episcopal see. St. Asaph, like Bangor, was badly damaged during the campaigns of the Anglo-Normans, and like Bangor it was virtually destroyed during the Edwardian invasion about 1282. It was damaged once more during the revolt of Owen Glendower and was not fully restored until the

end of the fifteenth century. To complete the comparison, it was Sir Giles Gilbert Scott who in the nineteenth century was responsible for a major reconstruction. Features of the church today include the distinguished Decorated architecture of the nave, and especially the design of the west window. The chancel to all appearance is a fine example of thirteenth-century architecture but it owes most to Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, though it is probable that he used some original work in his reconstruction.

St. David's, the most important and the most historic of the four, is largely in ruins, though the ruins are wonderfully impressive and bring back vividly the consummate artistry of the Middle Ages. It is a large cathedral by any standard of comparison, almost 300 feet long and more than 130 feet wide at the transepts, with a tower which rises to 125 feet. According to tradition the see of St. David's was founded in the sixth century. St. David was the patron saint of Wales. Nothing survives of the Celtic foundation, nor of the church which succeeded it and which was destroyed early in the Anglo-Norman period, not by the Normans themselves but by a band of Scandinavian warriors who landed in Pembrokeshire and brought death and destruction over a wide area. However, St. David's suffered less grievously than the other cathedrals of Wales during the later Middle Ages and much of the present church dates from the latter part of the twelfth century, though the most conspicuous features are the windows, which are in the style of fourteenth-century Gothic. The nave, however, is largely a Norman nave while the later additions were chiefly by way of enlarging the church. As so often happened in the case of medieval buildings, the tower collapsed early in the thirteenth century and made necessary a complete reconstruction of the transepts and the choir.

St. David's is a treasure-house of all the styles of architecture, from the Norman to the Perpendicular Gothic, though the ground plan is largely Norman. Though the church is still in use for divine service, almost everything else that belonged to the medieval see is in total ruin. Even the one gate which has survived of the original four, and is now the principal entrance to the cathedral precinct, is partly ruined, while the bishop's palace, an exceptionally beautiful building of the fourteenth century, is also ruinous.

Finally, Llandaff is a link between the most ancient history of Wales and the present day. It is Cardiff's own cathedral, situated only a few miles from the city centre, yet retaining perfectly its atmosphere of timeless peace in a village or, to be more precise, a city within a city. The see of Llandaff, like all the other Welsh sees, was founded before the end of the sixth century, and was one of the chief centres of the Celtic Christendom which flourished in the far west while the Anglo-Saxon invaders were laying waste the greater part of England. When the Normans were established a new church was built and was consecrated before 1150. It was a fine church, corresponding to the Norman stronghold which was built in Cardiff. Though the Norman kings reserved the right in co-operation with the Pope to appoint bishops to the see, it is significant that the Norman bishops of Llandaff were without exception Welshmen.

Little survives of the Norman cathedral, though here and there a round-headed arch and characteristic Norman moulding provide links with that famous building. The whole church was rebuilt towards the end of the twelfth and early in the thirteenth century, and the general character of the building is the Early English style of Gothic. The chapter-house is a later addition. After the Reformation decay set it, the fabric was neglected, and by the middle of the nineteenth century the whole church was ruinous.

Then came a restoration and the church became one of the chief centres of religion in South Wales until it was badly damaged by enemy bombardment during the Second World War. Today it has once more been restored and contains a giant sculpture of Christ in Majesty by Epstein. Many have criticized but no one could denigrate the artistic effect of Epstein's work, while the commissioning of a Jewish sculptor to carry out such an important work for the embellishment of a Christian church must be an event without parallel in the history of British cathedrals.

All the evidence suggests that Welshmen desired union with England long before the formal union took place, but they could never find an English sovereign who would grant them reasonable terms. The last great Welsh patriot seeking Welsh independence was Owen Glendower, but most Welshmen were content to throw in their lot with Henry Tudor, Henry of Richmond, who

seemed to hold out to the people of Wales a real hope of independence within a united realm. The Welsh bards poured forth poems in honour of Henry. All Welshmen, or almost all, were overjoyed when he won the Battle of Bosworth Field and thus secured his succession to the throne of England.

Yet even after 1535, when the formal Act of Union was signed, many Welshmen felt that they had been betrayed and that the terms of the union were so much in favour of England that the land of Wales was doomed to permanent depression. So the ideal of independence continued, as it does to the present day, even though formal union was assured. Yet progressive anglicization was carried out in all but the most remote districts and Wales gradually became a part of the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the fact that Welsh independence is still the battle cry of many cultured and educated Welsh people proves that the union was never complete, that the Welsh spirit is unquelled, and that the formal union was by no means the end of Welsh aspirations to independence.

Scotland in the Middle Ages

IN view of the long period of warfare in which Scotland was engaged from the early Middle Ages until the accession of a Scottish king to the throne of England in 1603, it is remarkable how rich and varied is the legacy of ancient buildings handed down to the present day. It is difficult to say whether more damage was done by recurrent internal strife or by the protracted struggle with England. But for these circumstances, which resulted in the destruction of a great number of beautiful and interesting buildings the legacy would have been even richer. One must remember, too, in assessing the medieval legacy that the population of Scotland was always small by comparison with that of England, while about half its total area—the mountainous districts of central and north-western Scotland—was inhabited only by small groups of warrior farmers who were in no position to make any major contribution to the cultural life of the country as a whole.

One must beware, too, of regarding medieval Scotland as an offshoot of England, or of thinking of its legacy in terms of the corresponding legacy of medieval England. Inevitably there are many parallel trends which may appear to bulk larger than the discrepancies between the two, but the fact remains that throughout the period there were major cultural differences between the two countries. English culture was derived directly from the Anglo-Saxon-Norman tradition and indirectly from Italy and southern Europe, with only a relatively small admixture of Celtic tradition in the west and north-west, and some Scandinavian survivals in the east. Scotland, however, came almost equally under the influence of ideas imported from Ireland, Scandinavia, and France at various periods of its history, with Anglo-Norman and later medieval English ideas only penetrating slowly from the south at times when there was peace between the two countries. When English ideas exercised a major influence either in the sphere of

cultural organization or of architecture, the impact of these ideas was usually delayed for years or even generations after they had found complete expression in England. An outstanding example of this tendency is that the Romanesque style of architecture persisted in Scotland long after the Transitional and Early English styles were well established in the south.

Another factor of vital importance in the cultural life of Scotland in the Middle Ages was that it became a united country centuries after the Normans brought a measure of unity to England—if, in fact, Scotland can ever be said to have been united until the decay of the clan system which followed the death of so many clansmen at the Battle of Culloden Muir and during the subsequent reprisals which were taken against the survivors between 1750 and 1800. Moreover, Scotland did not begin to emerge as a kingdom until the eleventh century.

During the Roman occupation and for some time afterwards the land was peopled by Picts, a race of mainly Celtic extraction corresponding with the Early Iron Age people of the south, but almost certainly including elements of earlier cultures. It was not until about A.D. 500 that the first of the Scotti, who ultimately gave their name to the kingdom, arrived as settlers from Ireland, bringing with them the Celtic Christian culture which had been kept alive in Ireland while England was being devastated by the heathen Anglo-Saxons.

The kingdom of the Scots was centred on Argyllshire and was known as Dalriada. For a century it made little headway in winning control over the Pictish lands, while much of the south of Scotland, south, that is, of the Forth-Clyde valley, came more directly under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria in the east and the Biritsh kingdom of Strathclyde in the west. However, many of the Picts had been converted to Christianity through the missionary journeys of St. Columba and others before St. Augustine was invited to the Court of Kent. The Christianity of these early saints was of the Celtic type but the Roman form was gradually superimposed on it and the process was completed by about A.D. 700.

As in England, the attacks of Scandinavian invaders helped in the process of national integration. They were instrumental in

bringing the first real union between Pictish and Scottish elements. Kenneth MacAlpine became first ruler of a united Kingdom of Picts and Scots in 844. A hundred years later Strathclyde was added to this kingdom, while the Lothian countryside was annexed early in the eleventh century, when the now united kingdom covering all the south and central districts was named Scotia or Scotland.

Meanwhile, Scandinavians had occupied much of the north, including virtually the whole of Caithness and Sutherland, as well as the northern and western isles. They continued in effective possession of parts of the mainland until the end of the twelfth century, while the Hebrides were not free of Norse influence until the second half of the thirteenth century. English influence began to be important for the first time during the reign of Malcolm III, who married a sister of the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar Atheling.

When David I (1124-53) was king the Anglo-Saxon-Norman cultural influence became really powerful. During David's reign there were friendly relations between the two countries. Large areas of land were granted to Anglo-Normans while David himself was responsible for the foundation and endowment of many abbeys, especially in the southern uplands. These, as in the more remote parts of England, became nuclei for the dissemination of Norman ideas. By 1200, however, the Scots were in alliance with France and French influence became as important, if not more so, than the English, especially during the long periods of conflict between Scottish and English armies.

That is a bare summary of the background of the Scottish medieval scene. It is against this that the medieval legacy can be seen in perspective.

It has been said that Scotland's whole history can be reconstructed from half a dozen of its ancient towns. Certainly the old towns, most of which have suffered many sieges, and seen many armies marching northward and southward, English as well as Scottish, are the most spectacular part of Scotland's historic heritage. Edinburgh and Stirling are at once the two most important and the two most steeped in history and tradition.

Edinburgh is a unique city, combining the qualities of a medieval stronghold with those of a modern commercial and

administrative capital, each facet balancing the other, with neither wholly dominant. The towering Castle Rock looks down on the busy shopping thoroughfare of Princes Street; the volcanic rocks of King's Park overhang the Palace of Holyroodhouse, with the ruins of Holyrood Abbey, the forerunner of the palace, close beside it. In a sense the Castle Rock epitomizes the struggle and turmoil of more than a thousand years of Scottish history. When it was first fortified is not known, but one can make a guess that it has been defended from time immemorial for by nature it is perfectly adapted to be held by a handful of defenders with even the most modest artificial aids to defence. Nearly 500 feet above sea-level at its highest point, it dominates the coastal plain of the Firth of Forth and at the same time overlooks hundreds of square miles of the lowlands to the south. Whatever the date of the first castle, it is historic fact rather than tradition that it had become a royal residence before the end of the eleventh century. It was thereafter rebuilt again and again, either to keep pace with the changing pattern of warfare or to make good the damage caused by siege.

The same to a lesser extent may be said of Stirling, where the castle is in an equally commanding position and the story of successive modifications is similar to that of Edinburgh, even down to the present day when both are in use as barracks.

Though the impressive appearance of their castles make most visitors to Edinburgh and Stirling go first to the ramparts to look out from them over the town and surrounding countryside, both towns have many other links with the storied past. To quote just one example in Edinburgh, the Church of St. Giles is a medieval building much restored but still used for divine worship, a church which has had a continuous history from the beginning of the twelfth century, or earlier, until the present day.

Other Scottish towns of special historic interest are Old Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Elgin and Dunkeld. But to pick out a few from the many is a little misleading, because there is scarcely a single town in Scotland except those of recent foundation which does not retain a great deal of historic and architectural interest. Even Glasgow, today the centre of one of Britain's most important and densely populated industrial areas, and at first glance having little

to carry the imagination back to the Middle Ages, nevertheless possesses in its cathedral, the cathedral church of St. Mungo, by far the finest and most imposing of the medieval churches north of the border, and one which contains in its fabric many priceless examples of the artistry which was evinced by thirteenth-century Scottish architecture.

The exceptions are towns like Inverness, which scarcely existed before the clans lost their power in the north except as strongholds designed to hold the Highlanders in check. Appropriately the castle, the third or fourth which had stood on the site, was destroyed in 1745 during the last fling of the clansmen under their leader, Prince Charles. Yet although Inverness can claim few direct links with the sixteenth century or earlier, it is still one of the most beautiful towns in Great Britain, especially when it is lighted by the setting sun and its stonework takes on something of the brilliance of the sparkling granite of Aberdeen.

In Scotland, as in England, the abbeys and castles are two of the most important groups of ancient monuments, but in both cases their history is markedly different from their English counterparts. As has already been implied, Christianity came to the Picts as well as to the Scots through the missionary journeys of saints from Ireland whose organization was monastic and who founded many small monastic cells from which they sent out priests into the surrounding countryside. Necessarily most of these are in the west, especially in Argyllshire and the western isles. The most famous of all is Iona, where a monastery was founded by St. Columba in 563. Nothing, of course, has survived of St. Columba's monastery, if only because the island was overrun by heathen Scandinavians, and its site, though a famous centre of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages, was left deserted for centuries. However, the monastery was rebuilt before the end of the eleventh century. Early in the thirteenth century a third monastic establishment was set up by the Benedictine Order. The ruins of this monastic church are picturesque, if meagre. They show the beauty of Romanesque architecture, which was clearly still being maintained in these parts of Britain which were so far from the Gothic influence. There are also slight ruins of the cloister and the abbey dormitory. The cathedral church of St. Mary is quite separate. Although this,

too, was founded in the thirteenth century, most of its fabric belongs to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The existing ruins of most abbeys and priories are less complete than those of correspondingly wealthy foundations in England. That is true for two very good reasons. One is that in the bitterest of all the struggles between English and Scottish armies the abbeys of the south suffered severely especially in 1544, when the invasion of Scotland was led by King Henry VIII, and in 1545, when the Earl of Hertford was in command of a powerful English army which devastated the whole of Scotland south of the Forth-Clyde valley. The abbeys were turned into strong-points for defence; Kelso Abbey, for instance, sustained a siege which was carried out with all the strength at the command of the English and which ended in the almost total destruction of the abbey and the slaughter of its defenders. It is said that the garrison in this case included a number of monks and that these were put to death as ruthlessly as the military units supporting them. Not only the great abbeys of Kelso, Melrose and Dryburgh but many lesser ones were destroyed during this campaign.

The second reason is that the Reformation aroused much more feeling in Scotland than it did in England. Whereas in England many of the monastic houses were allowed to moulder away, or were presented by the king to his friends who built new mansions from their stonework, in Scotland there was a veritable orgy of destruction and extraordinarily few of the monasteries were converted to any other use. Even so, many of the Scottish abbeys are magnificent in their ruins, such as Sweetheart or New Abbey in Dumfries-shire, Arbroath, and many others in the southern and eastern lowlands.

When we come to consider the castles of Scotland we are faced with a more imponderable problem. Edinburgh, Stirling and to a lesser degree Dumbarton, represent a tradition apart from the others, but in general every home of every nobleman was a castle during the Middle Ages, well fortified with all the defences which could be devised against a potential enemy. Quite apart from such obviously important castles as those of Stirling and Edinburgh, there were many castles along the east coast which represented the greatest efforts of Scottish castle builders to raise buildings which

would be immune from the attacks of contemporary besiegers—
castles such as those of Tantallon, Dunbar and Dunnottar, of
which the most impressive is Dunnottar situated on the coast of
Aberdeenshire and built in part on an isthmus connected with the
mainland only by a causeway which was defensible by a small
number of troops.

The history of some of those castles is relatively little known.
Dunnottar, for instance, was probably constructed by order of Sir
William Keith, Marischal of Scotland in the fourteenth century,
although an earlier castle may well have stood on the same site.
Much of the surviving fabric dates from the sixteenth century
and the castle as a whole was reputed to be the strongest in Scot-
land. In any case this castle, like many others along the east coast,
is said to have remained virtually intact until the period of the
Commonwealth, when gunpowder was a commonplace means of
warfare and the medieval defences became obsolete.

The castle of Dunbar is especially interesting because it includes
in its defences a natural rock formation which formed part of the
medieval defences. Though the ruins are shapeless, they give a
good idea of the strength of the medieval stronghold to which
Queen Mary came with the Earl of Darnley in 1566.

One of the most impressive of all the east-coast fortresses is
Tantallon, off the coast of East Lothian where the Firth of Forth
meets the open sea. This was the ancestral home of the Douglas
family, built in the thirteenth or the fourteenth century and surviv-
ing several sieges before it was overcome during the campaigns of
General Monk. Its great strength lay in its position on a promon-
tory with almost sheer faces, protected on three sides by the sea
and on the fourth by elaborate defences, including a drawbridge
across a wide moat. In a special sense Tantallon is the prototype
of all medieval castles, whether in England or Scotland, combining
great natural defensive power with the most elaborate artificial
defences which military engineers could devise.

The medieval cathedrals of Scotland are rather disappointing,
if only because they are mainly ruinous, though the medieval
cathedral of Glasgow is a signal exception. However, St. Andrews,
Elgin and Dunkeld, to name only three, are attractive even in
ruins and give a wonderfully clear impression of the skill and

artistry of their medieval builders. St. Andrews Cathedral has special interest because of the remains of the Norman church of St. Rule (St. Regulus). Dunkeld equally had interest, because of the Flamboyant style of the tracery of some of its Gothic windows, the only examples of the French Flamboyant style, it is said, in the whole of the British Isles.

Some phases of the medieval legacy are peculiar to Scotland. The most memorable are the palaces, a name applied to a particular type of castellated home built around a courtyard and not, as in England, referring only to the homes of bishops and kings. Very many of these palaces of Scotland were the homes of noblemen. The finest of them all is Linlithgow, only a few miles from Edinburgh and a relatively short distance also from Glasgow. Though ruinous, it is remarkably impressive and commands one of the most charming views in the lowlands of Scotland across the lawns which surround it and down to the artificial lake which beautifies its grounds. This palace was a royal one—according to tradition one of the homes of King David I, though none of the present fabric is earlier than the reign of the English sovereign King Edward I. But for an accident it might have come down to us intact, for it was still complete in 1746, when it was razed by fire at a time when fire-fighting was in its infancy and while it was the temporary quarters of a battalion of troops after the second battle of Falkirk.

If the palaces may be regarded as the homes of the noblity, there was another kind of home equally peculiar to Scotland which, though often called a castle, was not in any English sense of the term a fortress. These 'castles' were the homes of the Scottish equivalents of the English lords of the manor. Essentially they consisted of an enclosure protected by a tower which was designed to serve as a last line of defence in the event of attack by the landowner's neighbours or by invading forces. Very many of this type of home have survived, though usually the tower is the only part of the medieval establishment which is recognizable.

Another kind of tower, found only in Scotland, is typified by the tower of Abernethy, which was once the capital of the Pictish kingdom of Fife. There is difference of opinion on the most likely date of this tower, though it is obviously Romanesque in character

and was probably built at some time between the ninth and eleventh centuries. It is comparable with the round tower of the former cathedral city of Brechin, and with the smaller structure at Egilsay in the northern isles. All three were probably originally bell towers and are in the Irish tradition. They were doubtless attached to a church or monastery and date from the time when the Scotti from Ireland were infiltrating into the indigenous Pictish kingdoms.

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